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BIOGRAPHIA GALLICA:

OR, THE L I V E S

Of the most eminent

French Writers

Of BOTH SEXES,

I N

DIVINITY, PHILOSOPHY, MATHEMATICS, HISTORY, POETRY, &c. From the Restoration of Learning under Francis I. to the Present Time.

Interpersed with Pieces of Literature and collateral History.

*Sidereæ
Decus terrarum, animæ.*

SIL. ITAL.

V O L . II.

L O N D O N:

Printed for R. GRIFFITHS, at the *Dunciad* in St. Paul's Church-Yard; and L. DAVIS, at Lord Bacon's Head, in Fleet-street. M.DCCCLII.





V O L. II.

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BIOGRAPHIA GALLICA:

OR THE L I V E S

OF THE

Most eminent FRENCH WRITERS,
from the restoration of learning
under Francis I. to the present
time.

PHILIP QUINAUT, born 1635,
died 1688.

It had been the immemorial
custom of the actors at Paris,
to purchase at once from
the authors such dramatical
pieces which promised success; so that
all the subsequent profits of their repre-
sentation were wholly theirs. This how-
ever not unfrequently proved a detri-
ment to the company, the performances
on the stage falling short of expectation;

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and

and sometimes to the authors, whom the players used to beat down as low as possible; sometimes, indeed, the reputation of the author enhanced the price of his work: and to procure his pupil Quinault this advantage, Tristan read *The Rivals* to the players as his own. They had such hopes of the piece, that they immediately offered him a hundred crowns for it; then Tristan informed them, that the play was not actually his, but writ by a very ingenious young man of the name of Quinault: upon this the players drew back, and told Tristan, that the piece, though promising, not being his, they could not venture above fifty crowns upon it. Tristan pleaded hard, but the players insisting on the obscurity of the author, he bethought himself of an expedient to reconcile the interests of both parties. "Gentlemen, says he, what do you think of allowing the author one ninth of the money taken each night during the first run of the play, and afterwards it is to remain your sole property." The proposal was not only then unanimously agreed to, but appeared so equitable, that it has since been a standing rule of the contract betwixt authors and players; with

with an exception of those pieces of one, two, or three acts, for which one eighteenth is the settled allowance to the author.

Tristan prevailed upon Quinaut to serve a lawyer, who one day ordered him to go with a client of his, a gentleman of wit and merit, to his reporter, and acquaint him with his case. The counsellor being abroad and not expected home till late, Quinaut proposed to the gentleman to go to the play. At their first appearance, all the quality flocked about Quinaut, complimenting him on the beauty of his play (*The Indiscreet Lover*) which they came to see for the third or fourth time. The client was quite amazed, at such honours paid to one whom he had considered only as a mere quill-driver; but afterwards he could not sufficiently admire the combination of talents seemingly incompatible, when he heard Quinaut lay open his case to the reporter, with a perspicuity and chain of reasoning, which removed all his apprehensions of being cast.

I knew Quinaut, says Menage, clerk to a lawyer, when at the same time his first pieces were never acted without such

reiterated thunders of applause, that they were heard the whole length of the street. This talent was the making of our young poet, for a merchant, who loved the theatre, took such a fancy to him, that he would have Quinault come and live with him; and after his death, Quinault married his widow with a fortune of above forty thousand crowns.

A very good judge has said of Quinault, that he has never fallen into any incongruity, that he has never misplaced his sentiments, and what is more, the sentiment no where speaks a language so suitable, so much in character; and this consummates his praise, the language of the sentiment being perhaps more difficult to hit than the sentiment itself.

Lully's enemies used to say, that the success of his music was owing to Quinault's verses. One day some of his friends bantering with him on that head, told him, that to set faint love-lines to music was no such mighty matter, whereas strong energetical verses would try his skill; Lully animated as it were with a fit of enthusiasm, ran to a spinet and immediately sang out these four lines in *Iphigenia*, which being only descriptive,

tive, are not so susceptible of music as the passionate.

*A priest incircled by a savage croud,
With murd'rous hand shall my dear daughter stab,*

*Rend her fair bosom, and with prying eye
In her trem'lous intrails consult the gods.*

One of the hearers has several times attested, that they all were overpower'd with the imagination of such a ghastly spectacle, and that the notes which Lully gave to the words changed their countenances, and made their hairs to bristle up.

Mr. Voltaire in his twentieth-fourth letter concerning the English nation, has a sentence greatly to the honour of Quinault. *Boileau* was very partial both in his eulogiums and censures; he applauded *Segrais*, whose works no body reads; he abused *Quinault*, whose poetical pieces every one has got by heart: but what is equally to his honour, is this extract from a letter of his reviler *Boileau* to *Racine*. "The word friend
" puts me in mind of M. Quinault; be
" sure to tell him, that I am infinitely

“ obliged to him for remembering me.
“ You may assure him from me, that
“ I now reckon him one of those my
“ choice friends, whose mind and heart
“ I particularly esteem.”

It must be allowed that Quinaut blazoned the praises of the king in the prologues of his operas, to an excess of adulation, which gave occasion to a German prince after the battle of Hochstedt, to put this tart question to a French prisoner of rank: Pray, Sir, what kind of prologues to operas have you now in France?

A set of persons distinguished as well by their rank as their wit, being strangely out of humour at the applauses bestowed on Quinaut's operas, were resolved to decry them; and in order thereto were for prevailing upon Lully never to compose any music for Quinaut. An ugly plot was laid against Perraut, that he might no longer promote the vogue of those operas by his suffrage; but the worthy person with whom they supped that night, soon dissuaded them from such practices, and said, he would bring over Perraut by fair reasoning. Upon his acquainting
Perraut

Perraut of the danger attending any longer adherence to Quinaut, Perraut thanking him, ask'd, wherein Quinaut's operas were so extremely blameable; Why, answered he, the thoughts are neither sublime, delicate, nor studied enough; and the diction is answerable; low, and common; his stile is no more than a tiresome rotation of some languishing words and phrases. And, replied Perraut, Don't you perceive, that if these gentlemens fancy was to take place, most of the words would be such, which neither the actors could sing, nor the spectators understand. You can't but know, that the most clear and distinct voice in singing, frequently suppresses part of a word; so that howsoever natural and common the thoughts and words of a song may be, something is still lost: now, were the thoughts to be grand, subtle, and all studied, and the words all chosen sonorous and energetic, what would become of the pleasure of understanding them in music? In singing, from that syllable of a word which is heard, we must guess at that which is not: in a phrase, some words which the ear has taken in, must inform

us of those which have escaped it, and one part of a sentence must lead us to the meaning of the whole. Now, this is impracticable, unless the sentiment and diction be very plain, very natural, and very common. This is really falling foul upon M. Quinault for the very thing whereby he most deserves your praise and esteem, which is, to have composed so many entertaining pieces, and all of such variety, with a certain number of very common expressions, and very natural sentiments.

In his latter years Quinault expressed a sensible sorrow at having adapted his muse to the stage; and turned his whole mind to devotion. His first poem, after this happy change, begins,

*Je n'ai que trop chanté les jeux et les amours
Sur un ton plus sublime il faut me faire entendre :
Je vous dis, adieu, muse tendre
Je vous dis, adieu, pour toujours.*

We meet with a similar disposition in a very pleasing English poet (Waller) whose muse always strictly preserved its purity in its most amorous compositions.

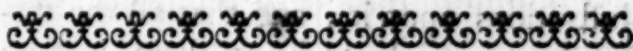
Ob!

Charles Ducange.

Ob! that when yourg I had thus employed
[my pen,

Or that I now could write as well as thou,
Sacred should be the product of the muse —
Verse so design'd on that high subject wrote,
Is the perfection of an ardent thought.
Verse shews a rich, inestimable vein,
When drop'd from heav'n, 'tis thither sent
[again.

Angels and we, assisted by this art,
May sing together, tho' we dwell apart.



CHARLES DUCANGE, died in 1688.

* * * * * D U C A N G E was a worthy,
* * * * * well-bred, good-natured man;
* * * * * fond as he was of study, he
* * * * * always chearfully laid aside
his books to welcome any visitors, say-
ing, that he studied for his pleasure,
which yet he would always postpone to
social duties.

The most remarkable particular we
have of him is, that once having sent
for some booksellers, he shewed them
an old trunk, telling them it contained
materials for a saleable book, and upon

any reasonable consideration they were theirs. The offer pleased, but upon opening the trunk they could find only a heap of flitters of paper, which seemed to have been torn, and thrown by, as of no use. Ducange laughing at their embarrassment, told them again, I assure you, gentlemen, my manuscript is actually in that trunk. At length one of them, upon a closer examination of some of the snips, discovered each to contain a word, with Ducange's remarks and illustrations upon it; and that all the difficulty would be to bring them into an alphabetical arrangement. Ducange's probity and erudition being well known, the bookseller, without any further explanation, made him a handsome offer for the trunk, and its valuable contents; and this is said to be the origin of Ducange's curious Latin glossary.

ISAAC

ISAAC DE BENSERADE, born 1612,
died 1691.

THE first remarkable display of Benferade's wit was when he waited on a bishop, in order to be confirmed. The bishop asking him if he would not change his Huguenotish Christian name (Benferade being born in that communion) What will you give me in exchange, answered the little spark, being not quite seven years old. There is nothing given, replied the bishop, for changing names: Then, returned he, I'll keep my own. Well said, child, concluded the bishop, whatever your name be, I dare say you'll make the most of it.

Leaving the colleges, he writ some pretty dramatical pieces, which, together with his being the son of a converted Huguenot, inclined cardinal Richlieu to take him into favour, and procure him a pension, which occasion-

ed the following epigram on the death of that minister.

*Here lies, alas ! 'tis true,
Good cardinal de Richlieu.
But what, in truth, disturbs me most,
Is, that with him my pension's lost.*

But this loss was repaired by another pension of three thousand livres from the Queen-Mother.

Benferade afterwards made his court to cardinal Mazarine, who countenanced him, but without any real advantage : however, Benferade continued now and then making some pretty verses, till the following artifice procured him the cardinal's liberal patronage. The cardinal, one evening at the king's desire, was telling him the manner in which he had spent his youth at the Pope's court : I was fond of all learning, but particularly of the belles lettres and poetry, in which latter I tried my skill with tolerable success ; I had a pleasing facility at airy gallant pieces ; in a word, I was the Benferade of the court of Rome ; soon after this account he withdrew to his own apartment. Within an hour Benferade comes

comes to court; his friends were not wanting to acquaint him of the cardinal's parallel. Benferade in a transport of joy flies from them to the cardinal's apartment, and knocks with all the hurry of impatience. The cardinal was just laid down to sleep, but Benferade would not be denied, and rushing in, flies to the cardinal's chamber, and casting himself on his knees, after asking pardon in the most solemn manner for his intrusion, he told the cardinal what he had just heard, and express'd himself in the strongest terms of gratitude for the honour done him by his eminence in comparing him to himself in poetical reputation; adding withal, that he was too enraptured with the glory to contain the effusions of his joy, and that he should have died at the door had he been hinder'd from pouring them forth at his feet. This forward homage so delighted the cardinal, that he assured him, that he should not be long without the first-fruits of his favour; and within a week he sent him a warrant for a pension of 1000 crowns on the abbey of St. Eloy, which was succeeded by other assignments upon the revenues of the church, and he might have been a
Bishop

Bishop if he would have devoted himself to the church. Besides these emoluments the king one morning ordered him three hundred pistoles, and the same prince gave him ten thousand livres for the prints to his *rondeaus* on *Ovid's Metamorphosis*; in which he embellishes the substance of the fable with an ingenious touch of morality.

Benferade had been nominated envoy to queen Christina of Sweden: now from the above-mentioned liberalities it seems difficult to account for what Costar says, in a letter on that occasion. “ I do not
 “ know whether the northern air will be
 “ more favourable to his fortune than
 “ that of the court has been; but I
 “ am persuaded that all the cold snow
 “ and frost of that boreatic country
 “ will never extinguish his innate fire,
 “ which vents itself with such incom-
 “ parable spirit; and that the presence
 “ of the most gallant and most witty
 “ of queens, will inspire him with things
 “ equal to any produced under warmer
 “ suns, and in climes

*Blest in each gift which heaven and earth impart,
 The smiles of nature, and the charms of art.*

But his legation did not take place.

His

His paraphrase upon Job caused him to be much talked of, especially as it was attended with a dedicatory sonnet to a lady, which concludes thus :

*S'il souffrit des maux incroyables
Il s'en plaignit, il en parla,
J'en connois de plus misérables.*

It met with great applause ; but some who envied Benferade set up a sonnet of Voiture's to Urania in opposition to it ; and the *beau monde* were divided into two parties of Jobists and Uranians ; but the neutral wits affirmed Voiture's to be the finest and Benferade's the most gallant.

He had a very masterly talent both at panegyric and satyr, as may be especially seen in his verses for the king's interludes ; they are originals ; the antients have furnished him with no model of this sort of raillery ; and nobody has been able to imitate him. With the descriptions of the gods and other personages, who were represented in these interludes, he mixed lively pictures of the courtiers who represented them : he therein often discovered their inclinations,

tions, attachments, and even their most secret adventures ; but in so agreeable, so fine, so cover'd a manner, that they who were rallied were the first who were pleased with it, and his jests left no concern or resentment ; which is an essential mark of their perfection.

If Benferade was not so well versed in pagan mythology as to explain the difference betwixt the Hamadryades and the Dryades, it must be owned that he cleared himself, with some address : the affair was thus ; being one day at a sylvan opera, in the duke's box, Madame asked him, what difference there was between the Hamadryades and the Dryades : this indeed put him to a stand, but luckily perceiving an archbishop and a bishop waiting for Madame's coming out (for they had so much regard to decency, that they would not appear in a stage box with their crosses) he smilingly answered, The very same difference, Madame, as between archbishops and bishops. This set the lords and ladies a laughing ; and as Madame repeated it the next day at her toilet, a nobleman who was present took the opportunity to recommend an ecclesiastic
of

of merit to her favour, saying, Here is a good subject to make a Dryade, and a Hamadryade of, when your highness shall be pleased to take it into your more serious consideration. How weak and spiteful is it to bring in this as a proof of Benferade's ignorance; the question might have puzzled professors. Such things as these are better known at our leaving the school, than when we are advanced to studies of a higher nature.

As Benferade knew his talent for poignant banTERS, he had been a singular wit, if he had ever let an occasion slip of exerting it. A courtier, who had been long suspected of impotency, and was touched to the quick at the least innuendo of it, meeting Benferade one day, said to him with an air of great satisfaction, Well, where's your jokes about my manhood, there's my wife brought to bed of a chopping boy. Dear Sir, replied Benferade, your lady's abilities were never called in question. Yet Benferade met with a mortification, which offensive raillery not seldom draws upon itself, having his mouth stopt before the academy, where placing himself in the seat of Furetiere, the compiler of a valuable

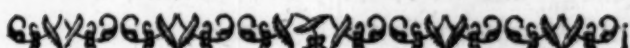
luable dictionary, he said with an oratorial voice, Here's a feat where I am like to utter a great deal of silly stuff. One of Furetiere's friends called out, Very likely, do but go on, you have made a rare beginning.

Benferade, like many others renowned for arts and arms, retired from court to a delightful recess at Gentilly ; where, Abbé Olivet says, he remembers that when he was young it was the custom to visit the remains of the ornaments with which Benferade had embellished his house and gardens, where every thing favoured of his poetical genius ; the barks of the trees were full of inscriptions, among others was the following.

*Fortune and honours, all adieu,
And whatsoe'er belongs to you ;
I to this retirement run
All your vanities to shun :
Thou too adieu, O powerful love,
Who art the hardest to remove.*

Benferade, in the decline of life, translated the psalms, at the same time when the stone excruciated him to such a degree, that he preferred the danger of cutting

cutting to a pain which indisposed him for society ; but the surgeon letting him blood, by way of precaution, pricked an artery, and instead of endeavouring to stop the effusion, ran away : a life could not be begun with more gallantry nor ended with more piety and submission to the will of God than Benferade's, receiving the last sacraments with a firmness inconceivable amidst such tortures, which must have been very sharp to one of his lively disposition.



GILES MENAGE, born 1613,
died 1692.

*****ENAGE, for the compass
* M * of his learning, has often been
* * * styled the Varro of the 17th
* * * century ; he was an excellent
grammarian, though he attained to speak
Latin fluently with very little grammatical assistance. Besides his erudition, he was also of a charming conversation, having a thousand choice things at command on any subject. He had studied the law with such success, that an eminent

gent Carmelite, among other encomiums, said to him,

Atque erit in triplici par tibi nemo foro.

This indeed was the profession to which his father designed him, and had for that purpose invested him with his own post, but it so little suited his genius, that he resigned it again to the old gentleman, which occasioned a long variance: yet he had so little talent for dancing, and especially for music, that he could never learn one tune, though his father had endeavoured to overcome that inaptitude by procuring the best master. He had some ecclesiastical titles, but was no farther engaged in the offices than was just sufficient to qualify him to enjoy some pensions out of the church revenues; besides which, he turned his patrimonial estate into an annuity, that he might live the more liberally, and without any other attention than the improvement of his mind.

Being admitted into the family of cardinal de Retz, he had every day new opportunities of displaying his learning and genius, yet for several years received

no reward for his constant services ; and as many attached themselves to the cardinal, in hopes that he would come to be prime minister, and then the best employments would fall to their share, Menage rallied their pretensions ; which they unhand somely resenting, and the cardinal refusing him justice, he obtained his discharge.

The cardinal once bidding Menage instruct him in judging of poetry, Menage told him, You have not time enough to spare, Sir, for such a long winded business, but when any verses are read to you, say always, That's *balderdash*, and it is a thousand to one if you do the author any injustice.

After this he hired an apartment, where he held every Wednesday an assembly, which he called his *Mercuriale*, where a great number of men of literature, French and foreigners, resorted ; which gave him a satisfaction beyond any prime minister's favours : and it was such an assembly as this, daily held at his house towards the close of his life, which alleviated the constant pain and confinement occasioned by two falls : but as all have their failings, Menage
was

was so given to loquacity, that he would scarce allow others to put in a word at these assemblies; he used to excuse himself, that, when he was in Anjou, he was accounted a man of too much taciturnity, and that in endeavouring to clear himself from that imputation, it was natural to run into the other extreme.

Menage's *Origines de la Langue Françoise*, especially with the subsequent improvement, is a very valuable work, and would doubtless have procured him a seat in the academy, but his *La Réquête des Dictionnaires* was unpardonable. This is one of the most ingenious pieces of raillery which was ever written; it makes all the dictionaries join in a petition, complaining that the academy's dictionary will be their utter ruin; thus the scope appears complimentary, but it is in reality interspersed with so many satyrical strokes, that the academy were greatly irritated. Some years after, many of the academicians named in it being dead, he was proposed as a candidate, but lost the election; after this disappointment, he would never suffer himself to be proposed again. On this repulse a gentleman of rank said, that Menage, only
as

as a punishment for having ridiculed the academy, ought to have been made a member, as the abuser of a girl is condemned to marry her. His apologists say, that the *Réquête* was not written out of any malignity, but merely to divert himself, a common fault among wits, and not lose several *bons mots* which came into his head : the same cause drew from him this stinging epigram upon Monsieur Cousin, who was suspected of impotence.

*Le grand traducteur de Procope
Faillit a tomber en syncope
Au moment qu'il fut ajourné
Pour consommer son mariage.
Ah ! dit il ! le penible ouvrage
Et que je suis infortuné !
Moi, qui fais de belles barangues
Moi, qui traduis en toutes langues
A quoi sert mon vaste savoir,
Puisque par tout on me diffame,
Pour n'avoir pas eu le pouvoir
De traduire une fille en femme.*

This gave rise to an irreconcilable hatred, and the injured party revenged it severely in an eulogium full of irony on the death of Menage.

It

It must be owned that Menage has been accused of being an universal pilferer; and one who seems to have had an equal share of the satyrical talent, exercised it on him in the following epigram, alluding to his plagiarisms and this imaginary mistress, Madamoiselle de Vergne, whom in his Latin poem he styles *Laverna*.

*Lesbia nulla tibi est; nulla est tibi dicta
Corinna*

*Carmine laudatur Cynthia nulla tuo.
Sed cum doctorum compiles scrinia vasum,
Nil mirum, si sit culta Laverna tibi.*

Another went still farther, and used to say, that he ought to be carried to the foot of Parnassus, and there be burnt in the forehead as a thief; but the genteelest reproof was from a Lady, who being in a company where Menage had retailed abundance of amusing things, which she knew to be the fruits of his reading, at last told him, All this Sir, is very pretty to be sure, but now favour us with something of your own.

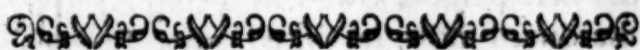
However, Menage, besides being a member of the academy *della Crusca*,
received

received several marks of esteem from Queen *Christina* of Sweden, with large offers to come to her Court. If he had removed, he must have been of a very different mind from an Envoy of France to her majesty; who, upon his return to court, after taking a view of several of the best parts of Sweden, being ask'd by the queen how he liked poor Sweden, bluntly replied, Ay, poor Sweden indeed, Madam, for, by the mass, if the whole country were mine, I wou'd sell every inch of it, and buy a farm in France or England.

Menage, in his advanced age, seeing himself forsaken by many of his friends, and attacked by those whom he had never injured, laid it so to heart, that he retired into the country; there, says he, is no rivalry, no envy, no falshood; there I shall hug myself in leisure and quiet. He had not been a week in this supposed seat of tranquillity, before a favourite pidgeon happened to be killed, which gave him more vexation than all the desertion of his friends or the asperity of his opponents; then changing his note, well, since no place is secure from trou-

bles, let's back to Paris, where they are of the most rational kind.

Menage is allowed to have given but a just character of himself, when he says; I love whosoever loves me; I esteem whosoever deserves it; and I do good to whomsoever I can.



PAUL PELISSON, born 1624,
died 1693.



HIS great man was brought up in protestantism, which he afterwards abjured without any imputation of fear or interest from all the candid persons of that sect; and afterwards, in some measure, acted the part of a missionary, labouring, by discourse, and many controversial writings, to bring others into the bosom of the church: however his zeal was not sanguinary, and he openly declared, that he could have wish'd the great affair of a general conversion of the Huguenots had continued to be carried on by calm conferences and nervous preachings, without violence and dragooning; a course, which

which all good men, of all religions, will discountenance. The generous emperor Maximilian II. publicly declared his detestation of the massacre at Paris on St. Bartholomew's day, committed by order of his son-in-law Charles IX. and observed to the son of that prince, that sovereigns tyrannizing over the consciences of men, intrude upon the prerogative of God, and accordingly are seen to come to violent ends, or to be dethroned; thus losing the earth, by endeavouring to merit heaven by hellish actions.

Pellisson being first clerk to M Fouquet, sur-intendant of the finances, was involved in his disgrace and imprisoned in the bastile; where gaining over one who was set as a spy upon him, he sent several pieces to Mademoiselle de Scudery, in vindication of M. Fouquet. Upon the publication, his force and eloquence were immediately discerned in them, which deprived him of pen and ink.

We now see one of the finest geniuses and most valuable men of the age destitute of the means of exercising his talents, and with no company in his imprisonment

prisonment but a dull Biscayner, who, however, luckily could play on the bagpipe, and this the inventive Pelisson found means to turn to some amusement. Perceiving a spider making its web near one of the little windows of the prison, he set about taming it; in order to which he used to catch flies, and when he laid one upon the edge of the window he directed the Biscayner to play a certain note; the spider came by degrees to understand the sound of this instrument, as a notice that some prey was ready, and never failed to run out of its hole upon hearing it: Pelisson having brought it to this docility, and moving its prey nearer and nearer to him, after a daily repetition of this exercise during some months, the spider was so thoroughly disciplined, that at the first alarm it would sally out and gripe a fly in any part of the room, and even from its instructor's knee.

Pelisson had two particular festivals; one was the anniversary of his admission into the church, the other of his deliverance out of the bastile; on the latter he never failed to discharge a certain number of debtors.

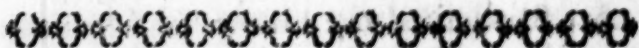
A remarkable honour was paid to the probity of Pelisson by Morus the reformed minister, whose Latin poem in praise of Venice having been recompensed with a golden chain by the senate, he left it in his will to Pelisson, *as the honestest man whom he had ever known*. Though he had forsaken opinions to which Morus was zealously attached: Yet Pelisson's inflexible probity did not make him a rigid censor to others; for in one of his discourses he says, A man may have very solid reasons for applying himself to some things which cannot be thought very solid, and a private and unknown duty may supersede unblameably a general one. He whom you blame for writing songs, may perhaps be obliged to it for cogent reasons; he finds the weakness of his health may be better restored, the wants of his family better supplied, by light and facetious, rather than grave and scientific compositions. If this be the case, I aver that morality itself will license all his songs and ludicrous pieces; and to blame the occupations of others, without knowing the motives or circumstances, I would avoid as bigotry and injustice.

Another still more distinguishing honour, paid to the capacity of Pelisson, was, that the French academy, after hearing him read part of the History of that body, which by their desire he was writing, it was unanimously resolved, that the first vacancy should be conferred on him, and that in the mean time he should have the privilege of sitting and voting in their assemblies as an elected academician; with this clause, That this should not be a precedent to any other person, on any account whatsoever. Let it be observed here, that the parliament of Paris was divided concerning the ratification and registry of the patent for the institution of the French academy: some, who were the discerning few, saw nothing anywise exceptionable in the institution; others, suspecting every thing which came from the cardinal de Richlieu, apprehended some fine-spun snare, some latent mischief in it; a third party, more inveterate against the cardinal, or wholly absorbed in the study of the law, treated it with contempt and invective; it was one of these last, who upon giving his vote against the registering, said, Gentlemen, this futile institution

tion being submitted to our examination, minds me of a mock-compliment paid to the senate by an emperor, who after he had deprived them of the cognizance of state affairs, vouchsafed to consult them what was the best sauce for a huge turbot which had been presented to him.

Pelisson's dying without so much as receiving the sacrament, or confessing his sins, made a great noise; at which Mademoiselle de Scudery was so grieved, that she desired the bishop of Meaux to send her a true state of the affair. Accordingly that prelate wrote her a letter, which was published. According to the bishop's account, Pelisson had sent for a confessor, but a defluxion choaked him before the father came. However Riencourt, in his history of Lewis XIV. published by authority, bears very hard upon Pelisson. "The religion of Paul Pelisson, says he, was variously talked of; some say, he had none at all; that he was only a time-server, and that, he seemed to think the religion of the prince was the best, as generally most was to be got by it. Others thought him a protestant in his heart; and others again,

that he was a sincere catholic. A certain circumstance is, that he had professed both these religions in different periods of his life, and discovered a zeal for both: but in his expiring moments, he did not profess any openly; for he would not receive the sacraments of the Romish church, nor dared to own himself a protestant; but persisted, to the last, in a deep silence, the causes of which are known only to God."



ROGER DE RABUTIN, Count de
Bussy, born 1622, died 1693.

HIS nobleman having signalised
This disposition for literature, by
an uncommon attachment and
proficiency at the college, was
taken from thence in his 16th year, to exert
his military qualities, being made captain
of foot in his father's regiment. He im-
mediately formed the design of writing
memoirs of the campaigns, as great
numbers of French officers do, taking care
withal to embellish them with amours,

as if these were no less important and glorious than the former. Upon his return to Paris his mother put him again to the academy; but, as he says, having now been used to command soldiers, and figure with officers, the professors had an unruly scholar of me.

His *Memoirs* are finely wrote, but, for some prudential reasons, many passages have been expunged, which struck at the reputation of certain persons. Here follow an extract or two from them.

“ At the battle of Dunkirk, the English under general Lockhart, climb’d up an eminence, which was so steep, that the second rank supported the first with the but-end of their pieces, and these received the same assistance from the third, and so on, animating each other with shouts of *England for ever, Huzza!* and this through a continual fire from the Spaniards posted on the summit. Yet, says the count, this daring intrepidity must have sunk under the many advantages of the enemy, had not a party of French horse fallen upon the rear of the Spaniards and put them into confusion. ”

His observation on the following event will be allowed to be very just.

“ After dinner, one day, at the siege
“ of Lerida, the company, who were
“ all intimate friends, fell to drinking
“ and singing : in the height of our jol-
“ lity the chevalier de Valiere was called
“ upon by the marquis de la Trouffe,
“ who was to relieve him, for instruc-
“ tions concerning what works were to
“ be carried on, but the marquis seeing
“ him engaged, was for putting it off :
“ No, says the chevalier, it is necessary
“ I should attend you along the trenches
“ for your better information ; so, gen-
“ tlemen, your servant for half an hour :
“ but within less than a quarter, a ser-
“ vant of his came crying out, that his
“ master was killed ; and it actually was
“ so ; for the marquis, who affected al-
“ ways to expose himself needlessly, walk-
“ ing along the dyke of the trenches,
“ instead of keeping within the gut, the
“ chevalier scorning to shew more cau-
“ tion, was knock’d on the head by a
“ musket ball. After looking at each
“ other, the songs and glassess went round
“ as briskly as if nothing at all had hap-
“ pened. So true it is, that war usually
“ hardens.

“ hardens the heart of man, even to
 “ the extinction of any humane sensibi-
 “ lity.”

The count de Buffy, besides his *Let-
 ters*, which are so highly esteem'd, wrote
 several detached pieces. In his *Rabuti-
 niana* he relates a pretty passage of the
 famous admiral de Charillon. As it was
 no secret that the Huguenots were very
 urgent with him to declare himself of
 their party, the queen, suspecting his
 fidelity, sent a gentleman to expostulate
 with him about his behaviour; who be-
 ing come to the seat where the admiral
 at that time resided, found him, to his
 great surprize, at the top of a tree with a
 bill in his hand, lopping off the useless
 branches. The gentleman, however, ha-
 ving roundly acquainted him with the
 queen's apprehensions; all the admiral's
 answer was, Go and tell her Majesty at
 what employment you found me: mean-
 ing that one who meditated commotions,
 would want both the leisure and tranqui-
 lity to amuse himself with lopping trees.

He likewise mentions a saying of car-
 dinal Mazarine on his deathbed, which
 is but little known. A large comet hap-
 pening to make its appearance, several

courtiers were for construing that phenomenon as a presage of his dissolution, and told him, that a stupendous comet had just appeared, which filled them with fears for his important life. Dying as he was, he turned their compliment into a jest, saying, My very good Lords, the comet does me too much honour.

The following remark of his, I dare say, will meet with little favour from the ecclesiastics. "How strange is the
" force of custom ; three words, *ego*
" *conjungo vos*, pronounced by a certain
" set of men, authorise a young man to
" lie with a girl, by the consent of all
" parties, and this is called a sacrament
" administred by a man of God ; the
" same fact, without these three previous
" words, brings the worst of infamy on
" a frail creature. In the first circumstance, what merry doings is there
" among the bride's relations, her own
" mother puts her to bed ; but in the
" second, they are ashamed to shew
" their heads, and the criminal is shaved
" and huddled away into a convent. It
" must be owned, some laws are very
" comical."

His

His *Use of Adversity* is inscribed to his children. The historical passages in this piece receive a fresh beauty from the effusions of parental tenderness intermixed with them.

In one part mentioning a discourse against balls, attributed to the prince of Conti, he says, " I have ever, my
" dear children, accounted balls dan-
" gerous ; and that not only from the
" nature of things, but my own expe-
" rience : the dehortations of the fa-
" thers are not to be slighted ; but on a
" case of pleasure, the suffrage of an
" illustrious courtier must be convictive.
" I know those assemblies are not alike
" dangerous to all, but the most insen-
" sible are stirred at them. They mostly
" consist of young persons, who are
" often overborn by opportunity : what
" then will become of their virtue amidst
" the lights, fiddles, wines, tempting
" objects, and the agitations of dance-
" ings ? This is a post too hot for an
" anchorite. If aged persons may go
" there safely, it is ridiculous ; and to
" young men, let custom say what it
" will, it is dangerous : in fine, I aver
" that a ball is no place for a christian."

Boileau

Boileau, by his pompous description of the passage of the Rhine in 1672, had raised such an idea of it, that it was magnified as the boldest enterprize ever executed ; Madame de Sevigny, it seems, had writ of it in very high terms to the count de Buffy ; but he, and few were better qualified, sets it in a true light, in his answer. “ The swimming over the Rhine is to be sure a fine action, but, Madam, it is far from being so hazardous as you are pleased to make it. Two thousand horse pass over against four or five hundred, besides these two thousand are sustained by a large army with the king in person at their head, and their opponents are quite out of heart at the impetuosity with which the campaign was opened on our side. Had the Dutch stood to it more resolutely, they might have killed a few more men, but overpower’d, at last, they must have been. I am apt to think that if the prince of Orange had been on the other side with his army, the passage would not have been undertaken ; if it had, here would have been hazard and temerity to the height ; yet this was no more than what Alexander faced at the passage of the Granicus, forcing

forcing his way across the river with forty thousand men against a hundred thousand. It is true, had he been beaten, he would have been called a madman, but he may thank his success for its being extolled as the finest action ever done in war."

Boileau and Racine being appointed the king's historians, it was his Majesty's pleasure that they should attend him in the campaign, and be witnesses of the transactions which they were to immortalise. At the siege of Ypres, the duke d'Eng-hien took these two Parnassian heroes into the trenches, upon which mademoiselle de Scudery in a letter tells the Count de Buffy, "Nothing would serve monsieur the duke at the siege of Ypres, but the king's historians must take a turn with him in the trenches, that by a nearer view of the danger they might better describe it;" but, adds she, "it is my opinion, that fear dimm'd their eyes." Mr. Buffy's answer to this is reckoned very judicious, and was as follows. "The Duke's carrying the poor historians to the trenches, so far from heightening their idea of the danger, must have abated it. Imagination always amplifies.

plifies those things; as the prince of Orange's grandfather used to say, *They who have never seen any thing of war think that the sword is never out of our bands."*

As the Count's *Memoirs*, though written with modesty, shew him to have been a thorough soldier; some parts of the following letter are evidences that he wanted not the court quality of obsequiousness. It was written when the extirpation of protestantism was taken in hand.

Letter to the Count d'Olon.

Chaseu, 8 Decemb. 1689.

Dear Cousin,

After what the bishop of Autun has told you from God, and M. de Harlay from the king, nothing more can remain to be said to you on the score of religion; accordingly I should pity you in silence, did not our kindred and particular friendship call upon me in this juncture to add a few short remonstrances.

You know as well as myself, Sir, that Blaise de Rabutin, father to our great aunt Benigna de Rabutin, was of the catholic, Roman, and apostolic religion. It is not above a hundred years since

since that worthy man lived, and it is, at most, no longer since your great grandfather embraced the pretended reformed religion.

Can you think that his change was the result of a discovery of truth? is there not room, at least to suspect that he was sway'd by the same ambition and discontent which misled the Condés and Colignys?

Upon an enquiry into the first sticklers for the reformation, as they called it, whether gentry or commonality, ecclesiastics or military, they are found to have been actuated either by selfishness or novelty: but granting that some were led by an unbiass'd love of truth and rectitude, and that their piety and learning were equally eminent, are private persons to set up to reform the church? Is not that legally the province only of Councils, convened by the viceregent of Christ?

For my part, were it put to me to change my religion for Mahometanism, I should be proof against threats and promises, and in the strength of God, even martyrdom would be welcome to me. But with so many reasons for mistrust

trust in your religion, and so many strong appearances that the truth is on the catholic side, were I a Huguenot, and it was the peremptory will of my prince that I should become a catholic, my opposition should last no longer than the time required to instruct me in it, and yet I am accounted to be as stubborn metal as many others.

Moreover, both communions hold the same fundamental principles, the triaity, incarnation, passion, and resurrection of our blessed Lord and Saviour : all the other articles of religion are too inconsiderable for an adherence to them, in opposition to our master's declared pleasure. I conjure you, dear cousin, in the name of that God whom we both acknowledge, attend to those divine and human reasons which jointly solicit you to change ; if you think that this argues weakness, and that perseverance has something noble in it, these are ideas which ought to be over-ruled by the numberless instances of men of rank, parts, and courage, who have conformed to his majesty's sentiments. That very judgment which is so fertile in reasonings in behalf of your heresy, methinks, cannot

not but point out to you those much stronger, those irrefragable ones for your obedience to the king and conversion to catholicism ; once more, my dear cousin, lay these things to heart, I beseech you, and be persuaded that these admonitions come from one who cannot without the tenderest concern see you professing errors and at the eve of very trying inconveniencies, and who, of all things, desires to extricate you from such a doubly dangerous condition, and bring you into the paths which lead to repose and honours in this world, and to felicity in that to come. No body can be with greater ardour than myself, &c.

His reception at court after his long exile, shews how the dispositions of others towards us vary according to circumstances. When the king permitted me to return to court, he said to me in a most gracious manner, I am glad to see you, it is a long time since we have seen each other. It is not less than seventeen years, Sire, but I am overjoyed that from my return and your condescending affability to me, I may conclude that all my misdemeanors are forgotten. Yes, Buffy,
all ;

all ; I have been displeased with you, but that has been over for some time. It would never have been so, Sire, if you could have seen the inward ardour and respect of my heart for your majesty. The king with a smile squeezed my shoulders, and went into his closet.

Immediately after, I thought I should have been stifled with the eager caresses of the courtiers ; I am sure I had much ado to stand their nauseous compliments ; friends, enemies, neutrals, all strove to outdo each other ; their behaviour was entirely the same, every one was for aping the sovereign.

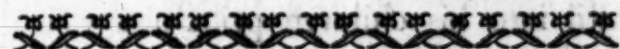
His pen, which he has exercised so finely on many subjects, caused the most signal misfortune of his life ; first by his *Amorous History of the Gauls*, and his *History of the Amours of the Palace Royal*, in which the person of the sovereign is disadvantageously introduced. They have both met with a better reception than his more solid pieces : many good judges give it as their opinion, that Petronius is infinitely less dangerous on account of his filthy obscenities, than in the delicate dress which Buffy Rabutin has given him ; and that intriguing appears much

much more pleasurable after reading the *Amorous History of the Gauls*, than Petronius; and that Juvenal's Satires are more apt to raise a detestation of lewdness than the most modest discourses against vice. There was a time, says Mr. Bayle, when many ladies, out of an affected prudery, would not say *j'ai mangé des confitures*, but *fitures*. Mr. Chevreau has also a pleasant passage on obscenities. A lady, says he, who has a great deal of wit but not less affectation, affirmed to me, that she never used any words which convey an impure idea, and that when in company with persons of good breeding, she says, *un fond d'artichaut, un fond de chapeau, une rue, qui n'a point de sortie*, for what is called *un cul de sae*. I answered, that she did very well, and that I would be sure to imitate her, but added, that some common words were unavoidable. She challenged me in a very polite manner to give one instance. I ask'd her how she would call a piece of money of sixty pence (*un écu*). Sixty pence, to be sure, replied she. But, madam, how do you call the letter in the alphabet which follows P. She replied with a blush, Truly, Sir, I little thought

thought you would have put me back to my Chris-cross-row.

After all, it appears that the count's disgrace turn'd to his infinite happiness. Several of his *Letters* shew, that he at last became strongly affected with the importance of a religious life; his conversion indeed moved but slowly, he employ'd all the means to regain favour which a man, who could not breathe out of a court, would practise; and the ill success of his petitions threw him into the deepest sorrow. This has exposed him to the censure of certain persons, who cannot pardon a brave man who desponds under any exigency. They opposed to him those gallant Romans, who received the sentence of deprivation with an unmoved constancy: But have these censurers of count de Buffy spent any part of their lives in courts? do they know the habits contracted in them? had they been more conversant in high life they would have been less severe. However, he at last raised himself to a christian firmness, which was not weakened by any subsequent tranquillity, the count dying in an exemplary manner.

The abbé Bignon, who succeeded him in the academy, observed in his eulogium on his predecessor, according to the usage of that body, That if the book which had brought all his misfortunes upon him, merited the censure of all prudent persons, yet his repentance could not be sufficiently commended.



ANTHONY ARNAUD, born 1612,
died 1694.

***** R. Arnaud was son to Mr. An-
* M * thony Arnaud, so famous for
* * * his pleadings against the Jesuits
***** in 1594: this was a second
original sin in Mr. Arnaud, not to be
wash'd away by any sacrament; and
that abominable pleading having render'd
the father a minister of Antichrist in the
eyes of the Jesuits, the son could not ex-
pect to be accounted any thing better by
them than a child of wrath. He has
been compared to Hanibal, whom the
Romans persecuted with a restless hatred,
and likewise in Hanibal's being brought
to swear at the altars, that when he
should

should be of age to bear arms, he would wage war with that ambitious people; for Mr. Arnaud's father so detested the principles and practices of the Jesuits, that in his harangue for the university against that order, he set forth with great strength and vehemency, the danger of suffering them to remain in the kingdom; and it is probable that he took care to instil into his children principles which he thought so important to the cause of truth and the welfare of the nation: at least it is certain, that they acted up to them with all their father's spirit; and this comparison of Mr. Arnaud to Hannibal is carried farther in *Letter V. of the Critique General*. "When I consider this
" great man forced to secrete himself
" from Jesuitical rancour, it brings to
" my mind the last words of exiled Hannibal, which the persecutions of the
" Romans drew from him. *Let us release the Romans from their continual
" anxiety, since they have not patience to
" wait for the death of an old man.*"

M. Arnaud, though a strong Jansenist, by his learning and polemical skill, attained to be a doctor of the Sorbonne.

Having

Having mentioned the Sorbonne, it may not be amiss to give a succinct account of it. It receives its name from Robert de Sorbonne, who founded it above four hundred years ago; its present magnificent structure owes its rise to the liberality of cardinal de Richlieu, who, besides considerable additions to the revenues, presented it with an infinite number of valuable books, so that its library is exceeded by very few in the whole world. The batchelor's degree in this university is not conferred till after many years study, and maintaining ten public theses; but that of doctor cannot be obtained without going through the Sorbonnical act, which lasts from the rising to the setting of the sun; during all which time the candidate is allow'd to be absent from the pulpit only for very short intervals, that he may be ready to answer all comers and goers who may object against his theses, which are mostly theological: these theses are previously to be inspected by a dean, that there be nothing in them contrary to the catholic faith, the church, and the pope: it is a custom also for the disputant to give a crown to every doctor who enters the

lists against him. This severe act was instituted by a franciscan friar, to exalt the dignity of a doctor of the Sorbonne; and that it might not be depreciated by favour or power, not even a prince of the blood can be admitted to the doctorate without undergoing such a probation.

M. Arnaud once gave a very distinguished instance of his docility, integrity, and humility; a scholar of his maintaining a public thesis, viz. *Ens synonyme convenit Deo & creatura*. An ecclesiastic there present took up the dispute, and press'd the scholar so close, that the master was obliged to come in to his assistance; but was himself gravelled. It had been easy for him to have got off by some distinction or other, the common subterfuge of professors; but he had a candour and love of truth above all evasions, and made no difficulty publicly to declare to his antagonist, that his opinion appeared to him to be the truth, that he would follow it for the future, and that he rejoiced in the opportunity of being undeceived. His book, *on frequent communion*, irritated the Jesuits against him, but without any judicial

judicial censure, till he published two letters on the case of the duke de Liancour, a great friend of the Port-Royal; this duke had sent his grand-daughter to be educated at Port-Royal, and kept the abbot de Bourzeys, a noted Jansenist, in his house: in the year 1655 he came to confession to a priest of St. Sulpice, his own parish, who flatly told him, there was no absolution for him unless he promised to dismiss the abbot, break off all correspondence with Port-Royal, and withdraw his grand-daughter from thence. Two propositions in these letters appeared so heterodox to the faculty of divinity at Paris, that he was expelled: he had absconded for several years before on a citation to Rome, for his book *on frequent communion*, and was for some time concealed at Port-Royal. This retired life continued near twenty-five years, till the *peace of Jansenism*, concluded in 1668, when he publicly paid his respects to the king and the nuncio, and in 1679, he voluntarily removed into the Low-countries, to avoid the machinations of his restless enemies.

Mr. Arnaud had refuted Jurieu's politicks of the clergy of France, with a

little too much acrimony, after which he handled another of his pieces. Jurieu equally vindictive and crafty, considered how he might best deter Mr. Arnaud from sticking in his skirts, and judging there was nothing like a personal attack, he cast about to the right and left for scandal and reproach, and trammelled it on unmercifully; accordingly Mr. Arnaud declined any farther contention with one who wielded the weapons so furiously, and resolved to be wholly silent, as to the reformed; and thus what the whole society of Jesuits could not compass, one single minister executed; I mean the silencing this doctor. This was not the only advantage which the Author of the *Esprit de Mr. Arnaud* drew from his satire; his virulency struck a terror into many others who would fain have attacked him; this was no more than a prudential delicacy, for there are few families which may not be reproached with some adventure, according to the Spanish proverb, *No ay generacion de no aya puta o ladron*; i. e. *No family without a whore or a thief*; and the author of the *Esprit* seemed to promise publication to every story, though sent by the post, whether
con-

concerning a private person, or minister of state. A young Jansenist, alluding to the effect of this Satire, compares Mr. Arnaud to the city of Troy, which, after baffling armies and fleets, fell by the artifice of a deserter and a wooden horse.

*Pariter insidiis perjuriq; arte Sinonis,
Creditor res captiq; nobis,
Quos neque Tydides, nec Larissæus Achilles
Non anni domuere decem, non mille carinæ.*

*With such deceits he gain'd their easy hearts,
Too prone to credit his perfidious arts.
What Diomedes, nor Thetis greater son,
A thousand ships, nor ten years siege, had done,
False lyes and fawning words, the city won.*

It is true, added he, this comparison will not hold in all points; for the *Esprit* little resembles the wooden horse, which had the select generals of the Greeks within it; but rather those ships, which, by a stratagem of Hanibal, were provided with earthen pots filled with serpents.

Nothing less could be expected from the mortified arrogance of such a one as Jurieu. In his *Accomplishment of the Prophecies*, he sets up for a prophet, and foretels the fall of Popery, and the deliverance of Huguenotism, with a pom-

pous shew of erudition, and no less confidence, than if God had unveiled futurity to him ; and as a sign of his being fully persuaded that such a glorious epocha was at hand, he had this medal struck : Mr. Jurieu in bust, with these words.

*Petrus Jurieu sacrosanctæ theologiæ
professor, pastor. ætat. L.*

In the exergue

Spe fati melioris alor.

Reverse.

The bottomless pit, mentioned chap ix. of the *Revelations*, out of which are seen to come locusts, and a smoak like that of a great furnace, whereby the sun is hindered from communicating its light to the moon, which is here represented in a total darkness.

The meaning of this figure is, that Jesus Christ being stiled in scripture the son of righteousness, and the moon being the emblem of the church, the errors and persecutions of the Romish church against true believers, hinder them from contemplating Jesus, and receiving his transporting illuminations ; but that his divine presence will soon scatter all the clouds of opposition, which is expressed in the motto,

Brevi

Brevi lucidior fulgabit.

In the exergue.

*Etiam venio cito. Amen. Veni domine
Jesu. 1687.*

Among other proofs, that Papistry is the religion of Antichrist, Mr. Jurieu shews, that in the Hebrew word *Romijith*, which, according to him signifies Roman, that is, Roman-beast, is found the number 666, the number of the beast which the Apocalypse makes the type of Antichrist; M. Simon, on the other hand, makes it out, that by the same way of going to work, Mr. Jurieu, as minister of Rotterdam, is himself, the very Antichrist spoken of by St. John; for in the word *Roterdami* may be found as plainly, that abominable number 666. Upon this allusion, it was that the count d'Avaux, embassador from France in Holland, also struck a medal in derision of Mr. Jurieu.

Mr. Jurieu in bust, with this inscription:

*Petrus Jurieu prædicator falso-reformatus
et propheta Roterdamensis.*

At the bottom, in Hebrew letters,

Minister Furius.

Reverse.

The beast with seven heads, and ten horns, which St. John saw rising out of the sea, *Revel. xiii.* with these words from the same chapter,

Datum est ei os loquens magna et blasphemias.

Exergue.

Quis similis bestiae?

Underneath

666.

It may be said indeed, that Jurieu's acrimony was authorised even by Mr. Arnaud's own documents; for he used to tell his pupils, that true eloquence had two essential properties; one of which was to set truth in its full light, and propose it in a manner which would but procure its entrance into the mind and heart; the other was to raise just and rational motions, and make impressions suitable to the subject. Now both these require terms which are most expressive of the defects in the thoughts, reasoning, or behaviour of our adversary, such as extravagancy, want of common sense, impertinence, fallacy, duplicity, sophistry, imposture, calumny, impiety, and irreligion; otherwise truth will not be

be clearly exhibited and consequently not penetrate the heart with a sufficient force; so that it is only an ignorant tenderness in those who except against such words as contumelious. Truth would suffer by this affected meekness; the edification of those we would reclaim or confirm could not otherwise be pushed home; and surely this is more to be regarded than their haughty touchiness. But besides these two esteemable principles of oratory, Mr. Arnaud, in a printed work, sets himself with the most scholastic seriousness to prove, that raillery and buffoonery are very shining ingredients in a controversy, and as such used by the holy fathers; and what is still stranger, besides bringing in Elijah, ridiculing the priests of Baal, he represents God himself as taunting Adam just after his fall, and afterwards to justify invectives against our opponents, he quotes the primitive fathers, and from the example of Christ and the apostles would recommend it as a praise-worthy act of love to God, and our neighbour.

Of all writers, none surpass'd Luther in these acts of love. What a fine sight it would be, says he, in one place, to see

the pope and his cardinals hanging symmetrically at a gibbet, like the seals which are fastened to his bulls; an incision should be made on their necks, and their tongues drawn through; this would be a fit attitude for them at their holding a council at the gibbet; and afterward in hell, amidst the hissing devils. What energetic overflowings of his charity is there in his answer to Henry VIII. of England, who had done him the honour to write against his *Captivity of Babylon*: “It is a question, whether folly
 “ can be more foolish, or stupidity more
 “ stupid, than this Henry’s noddle. If
 “ I am too hard upon him, he may
 “ thank himself; he has not attacked
 “ me with the heart of a king, but with
 “ the effrontery of a slave and the fil-
 “ liness of an old woman; since that
 “ mass of corruption, that earth-worm,
 “ has dared to blaspheme the majesty of
 “ my Sovereign, *jus mibi est majestatem*
 “ *Anglicam luto suo & stercore consper-*
 “ *gere.*—That Henry king of England
 “ lies, and lies so ridiculously, that he
 “ acts the part of a buffoon more than
 “ that of a king. Such impudent lies,
 “ such follies, such absurdities, are be-
 “ yond

“ yond what could be expected from a
“ brutish hardened whore!”

Mr. Arnaud's enemies, among other monstrous falsehoods, have made him to frequent a meeting of witches; concerning which Mr. Arnaud says very judiciously, “ Honour may be considered as concerned in a twofold respect, either in relation to the calumny itself, which may be of a heinous nature; or respecting those, who being prepossessed thereby, may receive an ill opinion of the person calumniated. Now it is the latter of these two, which lays an obligation to vindicate ourselves; for howsoever enormous any scandal may be in itself, yet if it be such that no man of sense will listen to it, it ought to be disregarded. Thus what the late bishop of Evreux said of his being informed by a converted sorcerer, that Mr. Arnaud had been at the witch's Junto, and that the devils were charmed with the harangue which he there made to them, was in itself a horrible charge; yet would any rational man call upon this doctor to refute it; or would he construe his silence on this supernatural fiction, to be an acknow-

ledgment of the fact, or inability to overthrow such an accusation?

The Perpetuity of the Faith (tho' he is not universally allowed to have been the author) deserves a particular mention, as it occasioned one of the best disputes betwixt the Romans and the Protestants; Mr. Claude, the advocate of the latter, has thereby gained the greatest reputation that ever minister did; and Mr. Arnaud, the champion for the former, perhaps never gave a more signal display of his wonderful abilities. Through the whole course of this famous contest, the reader is entertained on both sides, with the purest diction, the most specious argumentation, and the most striking strains of eloquence. Here, as often in war, both sides claimed the victory. Notwithstanding the incredible pains and expence of Port Royal, to procure attestations from the Greek priests of the conformity of their tenets with those of the Roman church *Emendicatis undique per legatos regios, consules, et missionarios Græcutorum hac de re testimoniis*, Spanheim, and M. Wheeler in his journey to Greece, mention several instances of these practices, which, with the lamentable ignorance

rance of those eastern Christians, and the immemorial discredit of the Greek church, made those certificates to be of little weight with the reformed.

Of all the catholic writers M. Arnaud has, with the greatest eloquence, force and learning, asserted the usefulness of translations of the scripture, and that the church never meant to debar the laity from reading them; but upon reading Mr. Simon's answers to him, the mind is at a loss. The opinions of doctors, the decrees of universities, the mandates of prelates, the public acts alledged on both sides, after all leave in an historical Pyrrhonism this famous question, *Whether the church approves or disapproves of the Laity's reading the scriptures in the vulgar tongue?* Thus doctors of the same communion overthrow each other's works, whilst the common enemy boasts that

Sæpe premente Deo, fert Deus alter opem.

Mr. Arnaud's sincere attachment to the true faith, and his literary talents, were duly valued at Rome; Clement X. was so pleased with some of his works, that

that he declared he should take it kindly if the author would send him all that had come from his pen ; and cardinal Altieri says frequently in his letters, *M. Arnaud has done very great Services to the church, it were to be wished that such a man were immortal.* Innocent XI. expressed great concern at his persecutions, and would have even conferred the purple upon him, had he himself not opposed it. Alexander VIII. whilst a cardinal, had a particular esteem and friendship for M. Arnaud ; nor did his elevation to the triple crown produce the least change in his disposition, for he continued giving him several marks of his kindness till M. Arnaud's constrained obscurity.

These Roman favours are denied by some ; but it is certain, and perhaps not less to his honour, that there was the most intimate friendship betwixt him and the famous Boileau, so that M. Arnaud wrote a defence of Boileau's tenth satyr against marriage. The rigid among the Jansenists could by no means digest his interfering in such matters : What, cried they, a veteran in theology in the 80th year of his age, to talk of
verses,

verses, women, and romances! frightful alienation of mind! tremendous declension! But at what a transcendent rate this defence was valued by Boileau, appears from the following rapture in his tenth epistle, addressed to his verses.

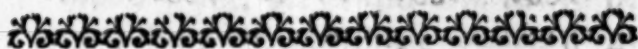
*Say tho' I've list'd in my friendly roll
So many writers of Ignatius' school,
That learned Arnaud, so esteem'd and fear'd,
By every good impartial man rever'd;
He justify'd my works, for me he drew
His pen, and set my innocence in view.
This on my future tomb, my verse, proclaim,
And mine confirm, by his immortal fame.
The richest jasper seek, and on the stone
Grave my high fate, and make his goodness known.*

To enliven this grave account, I shall add a pleasant passage; that during his concealment, the duchess of Longueville harboured him, but upon condition that he should appear in a lay habit, with a full wig and a sword. Being seiz'd with a fever in this asylum, the duchess sent for her physician and recommended to him to use all his skill for the recovery of a Gentleman, to whom, out of a particular regard, she had given an apartment. The patient, after acquainting the doctor
with

with all the symptoms of his case, asked him, what news? "There's great talk of a new Port Royal book, which all agree is either M. Arnaud's, or M. de Say's, but I cannot believe it to be the latter's, it seems some degrees beyond him." At this the divine, forgetting his secular accoutrements, abruptly answered, What do you mean? my Nephew is a better writer than I-am. Then the doctor eying his patient more attentively, went down stairs laughing, and said to the duchess, Your gentleman's illness, Madam, is not very dangerous; but I advise you, by all means let nobody see him, and especially enjoin him silence. The frequency of such indiscreet answers, from M. Arnaud and M. Nicole, made the duchess say, *That a libertine was fitter to be trusted with a secret than a meer scholar:*

M. Arnaud was such a hearty Frenchman, that towards the close of his life, being subject to lethargical dozings, nothing would so effectually dissipate them, as to tell him in a loud, earnest manner, that the French were beaten, that the king had been obliged to raise the siege
of

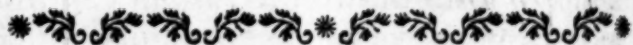
of some place, or any other disgraceful news. This roused his spirits immediately to maintain, That it could not be true, That it was a scandalous falsity.



FRANCIS CASSANDER died
1695.

THAT this person had a great deal of literary merit is evident from his admired translation of *Aristotle's Rhetoric*, but his savage sourness deprived him of those advantages which do not often fail to be the reward of eminent parts; he lived an irreconcilable Misanthrope; but at his death he quarrelled even with divine providence. The confessor who attended him laboured to bring him to a love of God by laying before him God's many mercies. Oh yes, answered Cassander, in an ironical, yet peevish way, I am infinitely obliged to him to be sure, for the fine part he gave me to act; and the priest urging him further to his duty; You know, added he, impiously, and with all the rancor of disappointed pride, in what manner

manner he let me live; and pointing to the matrafs on which he lay, you see in what manner he lets me die.



PETER NICOLE born 1625
died 1695.

Nicole was author of the *Moral M. Essays* and the *Logic of Port Royal* and is thought also to have had a hand in the famous *Perpetuity of Faith*. Some even make him the sole author of it, and relate that being very ill received by the censor of books on account of his mean exterior, he went to the famous Arnaud, and told him that he absolutely must father that book, otherwise no good would be done; adding wittily; *for Sir, men are not convinced by a book but by the name of the author.*

Though such a champion in controversies, he had no genius for sermons, and tells himself a story of his own incapacity this way. "Some years ago an acquaintance of mine shewing me the panegyric of a saint which he was to deli-

ver

ver from the pulpit and I frankly telling, him that I did not like it, he prevailed upon me to compose one for him ; which I did : he owned it and preached it like an orator ; yet, for, I did not fail to be there, I heard a continual buzzing on all sides, what a paltry discourse have we here ! here is stuff from the pulpit ? such a panegyric is an affront to the saint. Nor was this all ; after service several of note came to me, telling me with all seriousness, that as a friend of the preacher's I ought to dissuade him from what he had no gift for. The preacher, notwithstanding, applied to me for a second job, nor did I refuse him, as seducing self-love thought the audience more in the wrong than my dear self. Well, the second sermon was delivered to no less advantage than the first, and was received with no less ridicule.

It was no asperity of temper, but a zeal for what he thought truth which engaged him in controversies, and these only with ministers of another communion ; for he never interfered in the private disputes at *Port Royal*, saying that he was not for civil wars ; some have indeed accused his writings against the reformed

as

as tending to introduce a religious Pyrrhonism, and it has been wished of them, as it was by the Ancients, of the timber of the first vessel, that the tree were still standing.

He had a most amiable softness of temper, never resenting any personal attack. A thorough instance of his docility is, that P. Bouhours having criticised the diction in several passages of the Port Royal works, M. Nicole was the only one who submitted to them, and was guided by them in his admirable *Moral Essays*.

Madame de Longueville, like too many others, quickly passed from an impatience to be acquainted with famous men to a wearisomness of them, but M. Nicole's learning, ingenuity and politeness, kept her always the same to him. If he was contradicted in company with her, which sometimes happened, he was sure of a warm second in her; which made him say upon her death, *not only my trumpeter is dead, but I have also lost my Abby*; that lady always styling him Monsieur L'Abbé Nicole.

In the latter part of his life M. Nicole deviating from some of the Port Royal sentiments by the misrepresentation of
his

his enemies, fell into great disrepute: how much it affected his good heart may be concluded from this expression in a letter of his. *I am lately become a saint to whom few tapers are offered.*

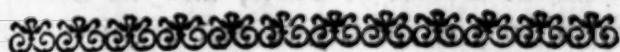
The many controversies in which M. Nicole was engaged, bring to mind bishop Bedel's exhortation in the management of them. He was bishop of Kilmore in Ireland, a shining light for parts and holiness, and zealous for converting the Papists, but by the most indearing lenity, disapproving harsh language and behaviour towards them. Allow me brethren, says he in a sermon, to speak my thoughts freely; many I know won't relish them, yet I must discharge my conscience, and sure I am the discreet will side with me. I have long been concerned at the manner in which some, both in print and the pulpit, treat their opponents; they give a full scope to their pen and tongue, but what comes from them is a mere heap of slanders and abuses; conceiting they deserve the laurel if they equal their enemies in these foul doings; they strive hard to out-do them, yet, here, he who does best in effect does worst. See what a text they cloak themselves

themselves with, *Answer a fool according to his folly*, throwing aside another *Answer, not a fool according to his folly, lest thou be like him*. Let us not envy the Papists and other heretics the glory of bearing down their opponents by railings; the more expert any one is in this, the more he differs from the divine pattern of charity, who has said, *Learn of me for I am meek and lowly*. It is not acrimony, it is not foul language which exposes error, but solid argumentations. To confound false doctrines is our business, and not to wrangle and rail. Were the Lord upon earth he would say to these fiery tempers, Preachers of my gospel confute popery, strenuously set yourselves against Antichrist, oppose all who have listed under his banner; but I have not called you to scold at them. This I think is the proper way of dealing with our popish adversaries. Possibly Luther, Calvin, and other great men, have gone a different way to work, but no set of men are to be an absolute rule of conduct; as men they were liable to excesses.

Happy were the consequences of this mildness to himself; for in the general massacre of 1641 his house was spared;
and

Bartholomew d' Herbelot. 71

and dying soon after, the Papists buried him in the cathedral church-yard near his wife, and some of their troops, when the body was let down, fired a salute, crying out *requiescat in pace ultimus Anglorum.*

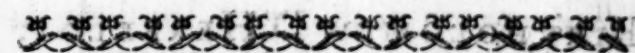


BARTHOLOMEW D'HERBELOT,
born 1636, died 1696.

✿✿✿✿✿ E is particularly famous for his
✿ H ✿ knowledge of the Oriental
✿ ✿ language; he travelled into
✿✿✿✿✿ Italy, with the only view of
meeting with some Armenians, and
others, from the East. Upon his arrival
at Florence, he was received by a secre-
tary of state, and conducted to a house
of six rooms on a floor, finely furnished
for his reception, with a table daily ser-
ved in the most exquisite manner, and
a coach with the grand duke's li-
veries, a very curious library being then
upon sale at Florence, that generous
prince desired Mr. Herbelot to take the
trouble of going to see it, and to examine
the Oriental manuscripts, laying by the
most

72 *Marchioness de Sevigne.*

most valuable, and setting down their prices. It was done, and the grand duke purchased them for a present to Mr. Herbelot, as what of all things would be the most useful, and most acceptable to him. Mr. Herbelot was the king's professor of Syriac at Paris, and his Oriental history is worthy of that dignity.



The MARCHIONESS DE SEVIGNE,
born 1626, died 1696.

ALTHOUGH nothing very extraordinary occurs to the life of this lady, her excellent collection of letters entitle her to notice.

One day, says Menage, I had hold of one of madame de Sevigne's hands betwixt both mine. Upon her drawing it away, Mr. Pelletier, standing by, said, Menage, that is the finest work which ever came from your hands with all your ability. If this was a pun, it must be allowed to be a very genteel one, and well applied.

The

The counteſs Colonne and madam Mazarin, in their way through Arles, went and paid a viſit to madam de Sevigne; with each a caſket of jewels, but in ſoul linen. This lady, who had a moſt accompliſhed ſoul, ſent each of them in the evening, a dozen of ſhifts, with a jocular billet beginning thus: *My dears, you are like the heroines in romances! jewels in abundance, but ſcarce a ſhift to their backs.*

Some of her uſual ſayings are handed down to us.—That they are the moſt unſupportable company who are witty all the day long.—Every thing is excuſable in lovers and mad folks.—It raiſes my ſpleen to hear an old creature ſay, I am too old to mend; this would ſound better in a young perſon; youth is ſo lovely, the body is then ſo perfect, that were the mind equally ſuch, the paſſions would be too vehement, which ſuch an aſſemblage muſt excite; but when the graces of youth begin to wither, then ſurely it is high time to labour after the moral and intellectual qualities, and endeavour to compenſate the loſs of beauty by the acquirement of merit.

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74 *Marchioness de Sevigne.*

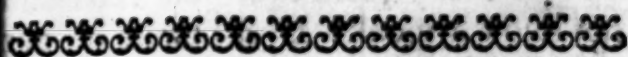
Her decision of the famous dispute betwixt Boileau and Perrault, has been allowed to be as just as concise. The antients are the finest, and we are the prettiest.

It is surprising that the marchioness's letters, when writ with her own hand, were natural, lively, energetic, and full of wit and dignity, but when she dictated them, *Oh! what a fall was there!*

However, the following lines applied to this ingenious lady's letters, are not at all misplaced.

*In them bright eloquence doth always smile;
Refin'd the sense, and exquisite the stile:
They move, instruct, and sweet delight impart;
The force of reason, and the charms of art.*

JOHN



JOHN BAPTIST SANTEUIL,
born 1630, died 1697.

¶ S ANTEUIL was a Regular,
and an instance that it is not
the habit and tonsure, which
make the monk. There being
then little esteemable in him except his wit
and admirable Latin poetry; accordingly,
one told him by way of reproach, That it
was only his irregularities which had hin-
dered him from being chosen Superior of
his community; No, answered he, persons
who have set out, and held on in the
right way, we never make Superiors;
but they who would have come to the
gallows, had they continued in the
world, are generally chosen for that of-
fice, and are the fittest; for practised in
all the arts of wickedness, and experi-
mentally acquainted with the corruptions
of nature, they know best what remedies
to apply.

A country gentleman once complain-
ing that he had been cheated by a monk,
Santeuil, who was present, said, How

76 *John Baptist Santeuil.*

Sir? so many years over your head and not know a monk! Ever beware of four things: Of a woman before, of a mule behind, of a cart sideways, and of a monk every way.

Dominic, the incomparable harlequin of the Italian theatre, was for having some Latin verses under a print of him, and goes to Santeuil; who abruptly asking him who he was? what brought him? who sent him? and when he had seen him shut the door against him. Dominic perceiving that such a humourist was not to be dealt with in the common way of address, returns to the cloister in his harlequin-habit and mask, with a scarlet cloak over it. He knocked at the door, and the poet after bidding him come in five or six times to no purpose, called out in a passion, if thou art the devil come in. Dominic upon this, throw- by his cloak, stalks in. This stopt Santeuil's mouth; he stared with his arms stretched, imagining it was no other than the devil. Dominic having stood for some time in a posture correspondent to the poet's terror, began to trip it about the room, with a thousand diverting antics. This removed all Santeuil's apprehen-

ensions of an infernal visitor, so that he started up and fell to the same gesticulations. Dominic seeing the sport took, drew his wooden sword and gave him several slaps on the cheeks, shoulders, and fingers; which Santeuil, a little nettled, endeavoured to return with his fists: but his adversary was too nimble for him; then Dominic loosening his girt, and Santeuil taking his amictus, the harlequin and monk fell to swinging each other; till the monk finding his adversary above his match, called out, Well, if you are the devil I must know your name? My name, answered Dominic, I am the Santeuil of the Italian theatre. Ods fish! is it so? then, replied Sateuil, I am the Dominic of St. Victor's. Upon which Dominic unmasking, after a hearty embrace, told Santeuil, he wanted a Latin inscription for his picture; and Santeuil immediately gave him,

Castigat ridendo mores.

An Abbé both of quality and merit, seeming not excessively pleased with some verses which Santeuil shewed him, the poet took upon him to say many very disobliging things. Next day, the Abbé,

to bring him into better temper, sent him ten pistoles. My compliments to the Abbé, said Santeuil to the servant who brought them, and let him know that I am very sorry I only railed at him, and that another time, I will not fail to thresh him, for doubtless it will procure me the better present.

Santeuil's pension being suppressed, he writ a Latin epigram, which M. de la Feuillade, took upon him to deliver to the king. A few days after, waiting on that lord at Versailles, he told the poet that he had shewed his epigram to Mr. de Meaux, who was not over pleased with it. Mr. de Meaux, answered Santeuil, An ignoramus indeed! An ignoramus! replied Mr. Feuillade, all in a flame, how! Mr. de Meaux, that bright luminary of the church an ignoramus! All his scholastic qualities I allow, said Santeuil, he is a profound divine, an acute controversialist, and a fine preacher; but in Latin poetry, I aver him to be an ignoramus, and not fit to be my train-bearer on Parnassus. Surely, you have both forgot that I am Santolius; he to have the presumption to censure my verses, and you the confidence to tell me

so!

So! M. de la Feuillade perceiving that there was something beyond enthusiasm in Santeuil, clapt his hand to his sword, in case this poetic rage had gone farther; when Santeuil added, Hear me, my lord, truth is truth; as you are the first man in the world for war, so am I for Latin verses; and he must be out of his wits who would go about to dispute the precedence with us. Softened by these delicious words, *the first man in the world for war*; wait here for me Santeuil, said M. de la Feuillade; and going immediately to the king, who seemed very chearful, Sire, said he, your majesty will scarce believe that I come from a greater madman than myself. The king asked with a laugh, who that could be? It is no other than Santeuil, answered M. de la Feuillade; then Sire, he has a merit beyond that of many wise people, which is to have written verses in honour of your majesty, which will out-last all your statues; it is quite improper, added he, that he, who can immortalise others, should himself be starving. He had a small pension, it was but 800 livres, which it seems is suppressed, and which I come to beg of your majesty to restore,

it will be to your own honour. It was granted, and Santeuil thanked his benefactor in a compliment which alone deserved such a pension.

The following story of M. de la Feuillade, is a digression which I believe will be excused. Figuring in his youth with distinguished splendor, at every court party of pleasure, his expence greatly exceeded his income; fine horses were then the prevailing taste, and no person was upon all occasions better mounted than he. Gaveau, the famous dealer in horses, attending at his levee one morning for a debt of 200 pistoles; M. de la Feuillade, bid his gentleman bring him six dead butterflies, out of such a drawer in his 'scritore. The court and city were at that time bewitched with such a fancy for butterflies, that they who had not a curious collection of them, were accounted people of no taste; and M. de la Feuillade was at the top of every fashion. Well, Gaveau, what do you think of these, said he. Beautiful creatures, answered the jockey, the rainbow is a fool to them; I had rather have a single wing of one of your butterflies, than all the peacocks tails in France.

France. Well, what do you imagine may be the worth of them? said M. de la Feuillade. To be sure, answered Gaveau, such fine things come dear, the value of them cannot be under a thousand crowns at least. That is rightly said, at least, replied M. de la Feuillade, they are worth more; but being at present out of money, take them, I give you them for my debt. No faith, Sir, I deal in horses, not in butterflies, and if in my tours to Denmark and Spain, to buy the flower of their horses, I carried butterflies, I believe I should e'en bring them back again. A second half-dozen was brought. Well friend Gaveau, what think you of these? Gaveau finding them incomparably more beautiful than the former, said, that to part with them for two thousand crowns, would be selling them for a song. Well, you shall have these for my note; noblemen are those you should get by. Poor Gaveau finding nothing coming but butterflies, went away to M. de la Feuillade's father. My lord, said he, I have been with your son about two hundred pistoles, due for horses. Well child, and what has he done? My lord, he was for paying me

82 *John Baptist Santeuil.*

with butterflies. You should have taken them, returned the old gentleman, butterflies are better than nothing. It must be added that this gay youth, by his courage, rose to great honours, paid all his debts, and lived like a worthy nobleman.

Santeuil was chosen to compose Latin inscriptions for all the chief fountains in Paris, in which how happily he succeeded may be seen in that of *Notre Dame Bridge*.

*Sequana cum primum reginæ allabitur urbi,
Tardat præcipites ambitiosus equas.
Captus amore loci cursum obliviscitur anceps,
Quo fluat et dulces nectit in urbe moras,
Hinc varios implens fluctu subeuntes canales
Fons fieri gaudet qui modo flumen erat.*

At length, sensible of the duty of a religious life, he turned his poetic talents to hymns and serious subjects; and his piety became no less admirable than his ludicrousness had been entertaining.

We find the same happy turn of mind in the celebrated earl of Orrery, who thus begins the preface to his *Poems on the festivals of the church*.

“ God, of his abundant mercy, having convinced me how much precious time I had cast away on airy verses, I resolved to take a final leave of that kind of poetry ; and in some degree to repair the unhappiness and fault of what was past, to dedicate my muse for the future intirely to sacred subjects,”

The following epitaph on Santeuil, appears to be the work of one not inferior to himself in Latin versification.

*Quem Deus præconem habuit quem sancta poetam,
Religio, latet hoc marmore Santalius,
Ille etiam heroas, fontesq; et flumina et hortos
Dixerat ; at cineres quid juvat iste labor ?
Fama hominum merces sit versibus æqua profanis,
Mercedem poscunt carmina sacra Deum.*



JOHN RACINE, born 1639, died 1699.

 RACINE was first put to school at Beauvais, and the civil wars breaking out at that time, the frenzy got among the scholars, who divided themselves

selves into parties, as they knew their parents were, and little Racine in one of the engagements received a hurt in the forehead with a stone, the marks of which he bore to the grave, so that the head-master used to shew him to every body as a hero. This story he would often tell in his mirth.

From thence he was removed to Port Royal; the Plutarch which he used, shews the strict caution of that place against any impurity of morals, since, though it was intirely Greek, all the free, or rather plain passages of that grave historian were carefully blotted out. Here he became known to the duke de Chevreuse, who ever honoured him with a particular esteem and friendship, and whose tender care of him in his last illness, are a charming instance of the truth of Quinctilian's saying, *That friendships began in childhood, and cemented by a familiarity of studies, hold out to the last.*

Amidst his scholastic occupations his genius strongly inclined him to poetry, and he was never so happy as when he could conceal himself in the abbey wood, with a *Sophocles* or *Euripides*, of whom
he

he could repeat the greatest part, for his memory was surprising. Happening upon the Greek romance of *The Loves of Theogenes and Cariclea*, he was once so absorbed in the reading of it, that one of the officers of the house surprised him, snatched the book out of his hands, and threw it into the fire; he found means to get another, which had the same fate, Getting a third, and soon learning it by heart, he carried it to the destroyer of the two former, saying, *here is a third for you to burn.*

His first remarkable piece, was an ode, called *The Nymph of the Seine*, on the king's marriage, which gained him a gift of a hundred louis, and a pension of six hundred livres on the establishment of men of letters.

Soon after he was sent by a relation to superintend the repairs of a fine seat; he could not so handsomly decline it, but every thing here was so contrary to his humour, that all his letters from them were dated *from Babylon.*

Being now in his twentieth year and unsettled, the hopes of a benefice by the resignation of his uncle, carried him into Languedoc, from whence in a letter
Jan.

Jan: 17, 1662, he writes thus to a friend. "I spend my time betwixt my
 " uncle, St. Thomas, and Virgil; I
 " have heaps of theological extracts,
 " and and some of poetry. My uncle
 " certainly designs me some good, he has
 " cloathed me in black from head to
 " foot, he makes no question but he shall
 " get something for me. Then I will en-
 " deavour to clear all my debts, among
 " which I don't forget my obligations
 " to yourself, the mention of them
 " raises a blush, *Erubuit puer salva re*
 " *est*; but this sentence fails with me,
 " for I am not a groat the richer." The
 uncle was willing to resign the bene-
 fice, and the nephew liked it, but the
 condition of becoming a Regular stuck
 with him.

A letter of his from hence shews the
 wretched state of morality, and good
 sense in that country. "I am confined
 " in a country worse in many respects
 " sure than Ovid's Pontus: there is
 " scarce any such thing here as common
 " sense, and of probity none at all; a
 " quarter of an hour makes you nau-
 " seate and detest the best of them; ac-
 " cordingly though I have been urged
 to

“ to appear in public company, I have
 “ kept off, none of them suit me, *non homo*
 “ *sed littus atque aer et solitudo mera.*”

And in another he says, “ they are for
 “ being poets at any rate; and so for
 “ my greater misery, fancying me to
 “ be of the inspired train, they make
 “ me Inspector General of their works;
 “ think what a plague this is, what
 “ a trial to taste and candour, to
 “ have our ears dinned with paultry
 “ stuff, and yet to be obliged under
 “ innumerable inconveniencies, to say,
 “ That is very natural; Smart indeed;
 “ That is hitting the sublime. Indeed I
 “ have learnt a little flexibility, in the sort
 “ of congees and compliments, of which
 “ they are here so lavish. In short, as
 “ the Italian saying has it, *Paese che vai*
 “ *usa che trovi.*” Tho’ any little chapel
 would have seemed a fortune to him,
 yet wearied out with the tergiversations
 of his uncle, and the oppositions of a
 four monk, he returned to Paris, and
 finished his *Thebaide*.

His *Andromaque* appeared in 1667, and
 shewed that the young poet, whom
 Boileau had learnt to rhyme with so
 much difficulty, was an admirable pro-
 ficient.

ficient. But now we find his zeal for poetry betrayed him into an indiscretion, and put him upon a satyrical piece, little expected from a nurseling of Port Royal. M. Nicole in a letter against one, who from being a dramatic writer, set up to explain the Revelations, had said that the first setting out of this enthusiast was, by scribbling romances and plays. *A quality, adds he, not very reputable in the account of discreet people, but quite abominable in the eyes of Christianity. A composer of novels, or a playwright are alike, public poisoners, not of the perishing bodies, but the more precious souls; chargeable with innumerable spiritual murders.* Racine thought this was levelled at him, especially as on the account of his intimacy with the players, he had been excluded from Port Royal by a letter from sister Racine his aunt, which well deserves to be inserted.

“ *Glory to Jesus Christ,*

“ *And to the most holy Sacrament.*

“ Upon information that you designed a journey hither, I had asked our mother’s leave to see you, because some persons had assured us that there

“ was

“ was a change in you, and that you
“ were seriously bent upon your con-
“ version ; and with what transport
“ should I have met you, and poured
“ my joy into your bosom, that God
“ had visited you with his sanctifying
“ light ; but most sensibly am I touched
“ with something which has reached my
“ ears, within these few days ; I write to
“ you in^r the affliction of my heart, and
“ with weeping eyes, wishing that my
“ incessant tears could obtain from God
“ your salvation, which of all things,
“ lies nearest my heart. I have heard
“ then that you more and more haunt a
“ set of men, whose name is an abomi-
“ nation to all who have the least
“ spark of piety, and justly excluded
“ from the church and the communion
“ of the faithful even at their death, un-
“ less upon a strict repentance ; judge
“ then my dear nephew, of my concern
“ and my agony, from my known tender-
“ ness for you ; you know how much
“ I have wished to see you entirely God’s,
“ in some creditable station. I entreat
“ you therefore, dear nephew, to have
“ pity on your own soul, and to lay to
“ heart the dreadful abyfs in which you
“ have

“ have plunged yourself; I could wish
 “ that what I have heard were not true,
 “ but if you are still wretchedly to con-
 “ tinue a commerce odious to God, and
 “ disgraceful among men, you are not
 “ to think of coming to see us, as
 “ you cannot but know, that I could not
 “ speak to you, knowing you to be in
 “ so deplorable and unchristian a calling.
 “ However, I shall never cease to pray
 “ that God will shew mercy to you, and
 “ to me in you, your salvation being
 “ above all things dear to me.”

Irritated rather than convinced by this
 letter which he called an excommunica-
 tion; and thinking that M. Nicole aimed
 at him in his invectives against the po-
 ets; he writ a first letter, of which the
 author of the continuation of the history
 of the French academy says, *I doubt
 whether our language affords any thing
 more ingenious or better writ.* The ene-
 mies of Port Royal stimulated him on,
 and are said to have promised him a be-
 nefice. But shewing a second letter, which
 he had prepared, to Boileau, this can-
 did man told him that whatever honour
 such peices might do to his wit, they
 would do none to his heart, as he defam-
 ed

ed a very esteemable society, and particularly M. Nicole, the best good natured man of them all, and to whom, as to the others, he was under no small obligations. Well, answered Racine, touched with this reproof, the public shall never see this second letter, and he made it his business to suppress the first.

About the year 1666 Racine obtained a benefice; but being obliged to stand a suit against the pretensions of a Regular, wearied out with dangling after judges, and talking whole hours with lawyers, he resigned the benefice, but exposed the gentlemen of the robe in his play of the *Litigants*.

This play, at first, was so coldly received, that the players durst not venture at a third time; but about a month after tacked it to a tragedy before the king, who was so taken with it, that he laughed several times very heartily to the wonder and mortification of most of the court, who however now soon changed their note and seconded the royal applause.

The players elevated with such unexpected success, drove away that very night to Paris, and knocked up the Author.

thor. Three coaches at the dead of the night, in a street which scarce sees one in the day, drew all the neighbourhood to the windows; and as it was well known that not a few considerable lawyers had taken offence at *The Litigants*, it was concluded that the poet had brought himself into trouble, and whilst he was enjoying the satisfaction of the court's approbation, all Paris thought him under confinement.

The advantageous impression which four verses of Racine's *Britannicus*, made on Lewis XIV. deserves to be remembered. Narcissus in his account to Nero of the people's talk against him, gives him to understand that his eagerness of excelling in things beneath an emperor exposed him to their censures.

*He prides himself to guide the rapid car,
 Contends for prizes foreign to his state,
 And of himself makes a ridiculous show,
 Nay, on the stage ignobly trills his voice.*

These lines struck the young monarch, who had used to dance at court ballets, where none surpassed him in agility and gracefulness; so that after this he never
 per-

performed in any ballet, owning that a king ought not to make a show of himself.

This tragedy was also honoured with the approbation of the great Condé in a happy application of these lines in it spoken by Titus of Berenice;

*Depuis trois ans entiers chaque jour je la vois,
Et crois toujours la voir pour la première
fois.*

A thought not very different from what Dryden puts in the mouth of Anthony to Cleopatra.

*I saw you ev'ry day, and all the day,
Yet ev'ry day seem'd but as the first;
So eager was I still to see you more.*

Towards the year 1674, M. Racine was admitted into the French academy; his speech on that occasion was very plain and short, but spoilt by his timidity; for he was so low that M. Colbert, who came on purpose to hear it, could not hear a single word, and they who sat close by him very few: neither has it appeared among the academical collections,

lections, nor been found since his death; probably he had no great thoughts of it, though the best of judges allow that he was born no less an orator than a poet, which is not always the case, though there be a near affinity betwixt those characters.

His *Phædra*, with all its merit, was very near being totally disgraced by the artifice of the assembly, which favoured Pradon, the author of a piece of the same name, and brought upon the stage at the same time. Their artifice cost them dear, no less than 15000 livres, for they bespoke the boxes during the first six nights of the two rival *Phædras*, crowding them at Pradon's and leaving them empty at that of Racine. However it soon triumphed over all opposition; and this gave him the greater joy, it being a piece which exhibits virtue in its full light, and in which the very thought of guilt is considered in the same horror as guilt itself. He hoped it would ingratiate the theatre with *persons reputable both by their piety and learning*. This expression proceeded from a desire of being reconciled to his former masters of Port Royal; besides it was his opinion that love had no-
thing

thing to do with tragedies unless it were intirely tragical.

It was in the year 1666 that the strict sentiments of religion which had been instilled into M. Racine suddenly began to operate; he owned dramatic authors to be piofoners; he resolved to forsake all kinds of poetry and in the fervor of his repentance, was for entring among the Carthusians; but from this extream he was dissuaded by his confessor. This judicious person represented to him that he was not formed for solitude, that it would be more advisable to continue in the world, and shun the dangers of it by marrying a person strictly religious; and that the endearing company of such a spouse, would induce him to break off those pernicious haunts, into which he had been drawn by a fondness for the theatre; he likewise gave him to hope that domestic cares would not fail even against his will, to damp the spirit of poetry, it being the nurseling of ease, and the product of a vacant mind.

Accordingly the next year he married a young gentlewoman of an unexceptionable character; and found in her an equivalent for all the witty clubs which

which he had forsaken. Tender expressions are not always genuine, Cicero calls his wife *mea lux — mea vita — mea desideria — fidelissima et optima conjux*, yet some time after disowned this dear spouse to marry an immense fortune; but religion which abhors all hypocrisy, had cemented the union of these two hearts, and reconciled their opposite dispositions; for indeed, they seemed to be little made for each other, the love of poetry being predominant in him, and she so averse from it, that while she lived she never knew any thing of a verse nor of her husband's own tragedies, any more than the names which happened to be mentioned in conversation. His tenderness for his family gave him a very quick sensibility of worldly incidents, and her indifference about wealth quite amazed Boileau. M. Racine, on returning with a purse of a thousand louis from Versailles to Boileau's house, where Mrs. Racine was expecting him, ran to her and embraced her, saying, *Congratulate me, here is a purse of a thousand louis, which the king has given me.* To which she answered only with complaining that *Billy was grown very naughty, and had not looked in his book*

book for two days. Another time, replied he, for that, let us now give our selves up to joy. She continued telling him, that when they got home, the boy must be brought to a sense of his fault; at this Boileau, who full of astonishment, was walking hastily to and fro in the room, no longer able to contain himself, cried out, Good God, here's stoicism! is it in nature thus to disregard a purse of a thousand louis?

M. Racine's first public care after his marriage, was to be reconciled to Messieurs de Port Royal; this was an easy matter with the good M. Nicole, who received him with open arms, but M. Arnaud stood out, though Boileau was the negotiator. One day he bethought himself of carrying to this austere person the tragedy of Phædra, as from the author, to shew him that a tragedy may be innocent in the account of the strictest casuists; and after reading to him that part of the preface where the author wishes that tragedy were brought to be approved of by the religious, and declaring in his name that he had no further concern with actors, actresses, and stage; he began with an oratorical air, to prove

that Tragedy was no farther dangerous than as perverted by the Poets; several divines, who happened to be with the doctor, listened with a general smile, at the paradoxes of a Poet, who was little acquainted with refined morality; and were greatly surprised when M. Arnaud said, *If it be so, he is not to blame, and tragedy is in itself of no ill tendency.* Boileau has declared he never, on any occasion whatever, felt such a pleasure; charm'd with success, he desired M. Arnaud's permission that the author of the tragedy might wait on him. Accordingly coming the next morning, though there was a great deal of company, the penitent, with a look of sorrow and submission, threw himself at his feet; the doctor did the like, and after a cordial embrace, assured him, that he would forget all that was past and be his steadfast friend.

In 1677 M. Racine was jointly with Boileau appointed to write the history of Lewis XIV. and in 1678 the two poets, a very rare phenomenon, were ordered to follow the army, that they might better describe the operations. Several of the nobility, their friends, were

were not wanting to divert themselves on their ignorance of military affairs. The evening before their departure, M. de Cavoye coming to Racine, ask'd him if he had taken care to have his horses contract-shod; the historian again ask'd him, what he meant? Why, answered the officer, do you imagine that upon a march we meet with farriers at every turn? no; we agree with a farrier at Paris, paying an extraordinary price, that the shoes he puts on our horses shall last and hold on six months. Racine then replied, This is more than I knew, Boileau never told me a word on't; but that man's thoughts are never at home. Racine goes away to Boileau, rattling him for his negligence, but Boileau tells him that he knew nothing of the matter; so they consulted about one of these contract-farriers, whilst M. de Cavoye had diverted the king with the success of his archness. As the slightest particulars relating to some men are entertaining, I shall add another of these waggeries: One evening, after a long march, Boileau threw himself upon a bed without any supper, and was soon fast asleep. M. de Cavoye being informed of it, came and

told him with an air of deep concern, The king is displeased with you, he made an observation of you today greatly to your prejudice. Then what is it, for God's sake, cried Boileau, starting up. Why, continued M. Cavoye, I am sorry to tell you of it, though the sooner you know it, perhaps, the better; his Majesty observed that you was all awry on horseback. If that's all, returned Boileau, welcome t'other nap.

Corneille, the sublime tragedian dying soon after, it fell to M. Racine's part to make a speech at the reception of two members; which, though admirable in the whole, contained particularly a delicate panegyric on Lewis XIV. shewing the facility of negociations, under a king whose ministers only trouble was *to communicate with dignity what was dictated to them with prudence*; and describing that prince in his closet the evening before he set out to head his armies, writing a billet to his ambassadors; and the foreign powers restrained within the narrow limits set them in that billet, he compares them to Antiochus, terrified, though at the head of numerous forces, with the heroic boldness of the Roman ambassador,

dor, drawing a circle round him, out of which he durst not stir before he gave his final answer. The subject of these well turned praises being informed of this speech, would hear it from the author, and when he had gone through it, said to him, *I am very well pleased with it, I would praise you more, if you had praised me less.*

Upon the finishing of any interesting part of the king's history, they always read it over before him, and the appointed place for these rehearsals was in the apartment of Madam de Montespan, a favourite of that monarch, at the time when the king came there to play; and Madam de Maintenon was usually present at these readings, which were succeeded by a party at play. When any peevish words escaped Madam de Montespan, they observed the king to smile at Madam de Maintenon, who sat by on a stool, but on a sudden was no more seen at these entertainments. Meeting her, not long after, they took the freedom to ask, why she absented herself from their history; she answered very coldly, *I am no longer admitted to such mysteries*; at which, she being mistress of an uncommon wit,

they were both surpris'd and concern'd ; but their surpris'e was greater, when the king being confin'd to his bed, and sending for them to bring what they had lately writ of the history, they found Madam de Maintenon sitting near the king's bolster, and talking familiarly with him. They were just beginning to read when Madam de Montespan unexpectedly came in, and after some compliments to the king, was so prolix in those to Madam de Maintenon, that the king, to cut them short, bid her sit down, adding, *as the work was begun by your desire, it is fit you should have the bearing of it.* She immediately brought a light to the reader, sat herself down, and strove to seem very attentive ; but from that time Madam de Maintenon's interest so visibly increased, that both the historians paid their court to her, according to the best of their skill. Racine was not accounted an expert courtier by the king himself, who seeing M. de Cavoye and Racine walking together, said, There's two men whom I often see together, and I dare say I know the reason, Cavoye with Racine sets up for

a wit, and Racine with Cavoye would be thought a courtier.

Nobody indeed could be more remote from a servile suppleness, as appears particularly from the two following instances, which shew at the same the tender parent and the strict christian.

Being one day just returned from Versailles, a gentleman came with an invitation to him to dine at the Hotel de Condé. *I must not have the honour, answered he, of going thither; it is above a week since I have seen my wife and children, who are overjoy'd at my being with them, and have provided a very fine carp; so that I must dine with the dear creatures.* The Gentleman told him, that an illustrious company would also be overjoyed at his being with them: Upon which, M. Racine fetching out the carp and shewing it to the gentleman, said, *See, as they have provided such a treat for me, whether I can dispense myself from dining with these poor children, who would have no pleasure in eating it without me; pray be so kind as to mention my excuse to his serene highness.* The gentleman did so, and those great personages profest themselves better pleased with such a parental

tenderness, than they could have been with his delightful conversation. The second is, It being signified to him that his giving a few instructions in oratory to a princess of the blood-royal, would be agreeable to his majesty; he went, but finding that it was to instruct her in acting some passages in *Andromaque*, which had been taught her, he withdrew, begging that he might not be put upon lessons of that kind.

Of his admirable elocution there is a known instance: Being in company with several persons of distinguish'd learning, and the discourse falling upon Sophocles; heated by the name of an author he so greatly admired, he took a Greek Sophocles and read the tragedy of Oedipus, translating it extemporarily; and such was his emotion, that he imprest on his hearers all the sentiments of terror and pity with which that pathetic performance abounds. "I have seen, says one who was present, our best plays performed by our best players, but was never affected in any measure as by this reading; and whilst I am writing this, methinks I see Racine, with his book in his hand, and all the company about him overpower'd
with

with tragical sentiments." Whilst Racine was about his *Mitbridates*, he used every morning to go to the garden of the Thuilleries, where artificers of all kinds were then at work; once, without so much as minding that anybody was there, repeating his verses with a loud energetical voice, he suddenly found himself surrounded by a croud of those artificers, who had left off work to follow him, as a frantic who was certainly going to throw himself into the basin. It is a singular honour to this play, that it pleased Charles XII. of Sweden, and so much, that he used to shew the most striking places to one of his ministers. It is well known, that the same warlike prince reading the first epistle of Boileau, where Alexander is called a madman, tore the leaf out.

However, at the repeated solicitations of Madam de Maintenon, for a religious tragedy to be acted by the young Ladies of St. Cyr *, he composed his

* A seminary out of Paris, founded by Madam de Maintenon, for above a hundred young ladies of good families, with no fortunes.

Esther, and afterwards *Albaliab*, and some oratorios on scriptural subjects. At the representation of *Esther* before the king, Elisa's memory failed her; at which Racine, full of concern, cried out, Ah, Miss, how you spoil my Play! The poor young Lady, struck with this reprimand, fell a crying: this quickly alter'd Racine's concern; he ran to her, wiped her tears, and could not forbear weeping at the uneasiness he had given. This was far from being a disgrace to him, according to the maxim of the antients: *aradosi d'apidanques ardes*.

The oratorios were several times performed before the king, who, upon the first hearing of these words:

*Mon Dieu quelle guerre cruelle !
Je trouve deux hommes en moi :
L'un veut que plein d'amour pour toi,
Mon cœur te soit toujours fidèle,
L'autre à tes volontés rebelle
Me revolte contre sa loi.*

turning to Madam de Maintenon, said,
Madam, these are two men I am intimately acquainted with.

In the year 1690 he was appointed gentleman in ordinary to the king, and his mind being now totally alienated from poetry, he made the campaign of the siege of Namur: His letters from thence to Boileau manifest that history took up all his thoughts. A tart saying is reported of him, though spoke without any ill meaning; when, after the capitulation of the castle of Namur, the prince of Brabant the governor was going out, M. Racine happened to say to him, *here's very bad weather for removing*; by which he meant no more than the continual heavy rains. The prince mistook it for a raillery, but mildly replied, *The worst weather is too fair for such a removal*; and the king was mightily pleased with the answer.

It was purely the effect of domestic tenderness, that the character which Cicero gives of himself was fully applicable to M. Racine, *Semper magis adversos rerum exitus metuens quam sperans secundos*; and the following event certainly touched him too sensibly, and made him conclude what was never thought of.

Madam de Maintenon, who had a particular value for him, discoursing with

him upon the distresses of the people, he answered, They were the usual consequences of long wars, but that they might be alleviated upon a proper representation to those at the helm. Nobody, replied she instantly, fitter than yourself; I lay it upon you, and be assured the paper shall never go out of my hands. There was no denying, and a most admirable memoir he drew up: This lady was once ruminating over it, when the king happened to surprize her, and after reading some lines, earnestly ask'd who was the author; she answered, that she was under secrecy: The author I will know, said the king, and with such a decisive air, that she was obliged to declare him. Upon which, the king, with some discontent, went away, saying, *What! because he makes such fine verses, does he fancy he knows every thing; and being a fine poet, must he needs turn statesman?*

Madam de Maintenon sent to inform him of what had happened, and not to see her till farther notice. The shock which this gave him was thought the cause of a fever, and of an abscess in the liver, which soon after seized him; his wound

wound was the deeper, being just upon procuring a handsome court-settlement for his eldest son ; however he soon went abroad, though in a weak condition. Soon after he had an opportunity to speak to his patroness in Versailles garden : What are you afraid of ? said she, your misfortune is owing to me, and my honour is concerned in repairing it ; your fortune is mine ; 'tis but a cloud, I'll bring on fair weather again. No, no, Madam, answered he, never for me. Why so, replied she, do you doubt of my heart or interest. Neither, returned he, Madam, I know your goodness, but I have an aunt, whose love for me is of another kind ; that devout maid is daily praying that God would send me crosses, disappointments, reproaches and mortifications, to lay me low ; and her interest is more prevalent than yours. Just as she was going to reply, they heard the noise of a chaise ; *Here's the king taking the air*, cried she, *bide yourself*.

His illness now strongly declared itself and confined him to his bed ; many noblemen of the first rank visited him, and the king himself sent the kindest messages. When his bosom friend Boileau came to take

take his last leave of him, he raised himself up, and embracing him, said, *I account it a happiness to me that I die before you.*

Sensible of the near approach of death, he directed one of his sons to write a letter to M. de Cavoye, to solicit the payment of the arrears of his pension, that he might leave some ready money to his family: When the letter was read to him, Why, said he, did not you also mention Boileau's arrears? we must not be separated; write another letter, that Boileau may see I am his friend to the last.

This serenity in his last moments surprized and rejoiced all who had been acquainted with his former avowed dread of death; and some days after, Boileau, who had not for some time been at court, going thither to receive his majesty's orders, as the history was now devolved upon him alone, and mentioning to his majesty M. Racine's christian heroism at his death; Yes, said the king, I have heard of it, and was surprized; he used to fear it too much, and I remember that at the siege of Ghent you was the bravest of the two.

That

That generous monarch being informed that he had left more honour than wealth to a widow, with seven children, was pleased to send his condolence to Mrs. Racine, acquainting her, that he had ordered a pension of 2000 livres for her family, to be equally divided till the last survivor.

The following will was found inclosed in a letter to his wife.

IN the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

I desire that after my death, my body be carried to Port-Royal des Champs, there to be buried in the burying-place at the feet of M. Hamon's [*bis former master*] grave. I most humbly request the lady abbess and the nuns, to allow me that honour, though I acknowledge myself unworthy of it, on account of the offences of my past life, and in the abuse of the excellent education which I formerly received in that house, and of the shining examples of piety and penance which I saw there, and of whom I have been but a barren admirer. But the greater my offences, the more need have I of the prayers of such a devout com-

community. I also desire the abbess and nuns to accept of the sum of 900 livres. At Paris, in my closet, the 10th of October, 1698. Sign'd

RACINE.

Upon the demolition of Port-Royal leave was granted to remove M. Racine's body to Paris. Besides two dramatic pieces, there is an admirable collection of letters to and from M. Racine, published by the worthy son of such a father. The following specimens, which are not peculiarly excellent, must be an invitation to read the whole of such a charming correspondence.

Fragment of a Letter to M. Racine, from
M. de Guilleragues, Ambassador at
Constantinople.

Pera, 9th June, 1684.

" — Yes, Sir, I cannot reconcile myself to these countries, of which the antient poets and historians have said so many fine things ; but they betray either their ignorance or fallacy. The Scamander and Simois are dried up ten months of the twelve, and their channel is no better than a ditch : The Hebrus is very
far

far from any thing of a river: Natolia, Pontus, Nicomedia, Ithaca, now Cephalonia, Macedonia, the districts of Larissa and Athens, could never raise one fifteenth of the men mentioned in historians. It is not supposable that these countries, however well cultivated, were ever very populous; the soil being every where stony, adust, without so much as a spring; the wild hills, the barren coasts, are no alterations since the time of these writers: The harbour of Aulis, now quite useless, may have been a good one, but never could contain the Grecian fleet of a thousand ships, no, nor a thousand boats: Cytherea and Paphos are frightful places; as to the former, there is not such a good-for-nothing spot in the whole world, and the latter is a mere desert, its air is so very unwholesome: Naxos is no better. Probably the poets made those places the residence of Venus, where their mistresses lived; they have extremely misplaced her: Church history talks of two thousand bishopricks in Greece; by what I have seen, I question if it ever afforded so many parishes."——

A Letter from M. Racine to his eldest son then at the Hague with the Ambassador.

HOW agreeably was I surpris'd at M. Bonnac's [the ambassador's secretary] opening my closet door, but my joy was suddenly damp'd ; for the joint intreaties of my wife and me could not prevail upon him to take up his quarters at our house ; the next day we were at him again, and I even threaten'd him, that I would direct you to remove to some inn at the Hague ; but when he told me that he was absolutely obliged to be near M. de Torcy, that silenced me, but sorely against my will ; and from the goodness of your mother's heart, you'll conclude that she was no less concerned than myself. There is nothing in this world which she would not do to convince M. Bonrepaux of her sense of his kindness to you.—I durst not ask Bonnac whether God has any share of your thoughts, fearing the answer might not be as I ardently wish ; yet I am not without hopes, that in your endeavours to become a man of uniform probity, it will occur to you, that there is no being
such,

such, without rendering to God his due. You are no stranger to religion; acquainted as you are with its beauty and dignity, you cannot surely but love it. Excuse me if I sometimes harp upon this string, nothing, you know, lies nearer my heart, and take my word for it, any proficiency in it convinces me more and more, that there is nothing here below so delightful as a quiet conscience, and an adherence to God as an affectionate and all-sufficient Father.

Letter from Mrs. Racine to the same son.

Dear son,

Your father being indisposed, it is my part to acquaint you how agreeable your application is to us. Be persuaded that your advancements in those qualifications which are requisite to a worthy discharge of your employment, will give us the greatest pleasure. I thank you for your intended kindness of bringing me a gown, but no brocade for me. Your father is very sorry to hear that you are under a necessity of wearing a wig; as he hates that foppish invention, he could wish you would keep to your hair,

hair, however he remits it to the ambassador's pleasure. All our little family went t'other day to dine at M. Boileau's villa, where we were entertained in the kindest manner; he took Lewis and Peggy into the wood, playing and jesting with them, and telling them he would carry them where they should not find their way back to pappà and mamma: he did not understand a word of all the pretty prattle of the poor things: certainly there is not a better man breathing. Lewis sends his Love to you, the dear little creature often promises us with the greatest seriousness, that he will never go to plays as you do. In your letter to me, you are pleased to desire my prayers: if my prayers were heard, you would soon be a perfect Christian, since your salvation is what I wish as much as any thing; but think, son, that the prayers of parents avail little, unless children join their endeavours to improve a religious education. Adieu, my dear son, I embrace you.

A Letter

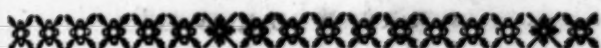
A Letter from M. Racine to the same son, when at the college.

YOU gave me a very pleasing account of your studies and your conversation with M. Boileau; it is a most valuable favour for such a man as he to familiarise himself with you, and do you, pray, take care to hear and not be forward with your tongue. I like your translation well enough; let your next be one of the interesting letters to Atticus; there are a great many very fine ones on the state of the commonwealth and the transactions then in agitation at Rome; the wit and judgment are wonderfully improved on reading them, by few works more: but especially let me never hear that you make free with the name of such a respectable person as Cicero; it is not for such a stripling as you, nor indeed for any one, to give him the appellation of a coward: I charge you never forget the saying of Quinctilian, himself a great man, *Ille se profecisse sciat cui Cicero valde placebit.* So it would have become you much better to have only said, that he had not the intrepid courage of Cato: Let me tell

tell you also, that if you had carefully read the life of Cicero in Plutarch, you must have observed that his death shewed the man of resolution, so that probably he would not have pouted and cried as you did, only at having your teeth cleansed. Your eldest sister has a complaint against you ; she says it is above four months since she has heard from you ; methinks some return is due for such a real affection as I see she has for you : Is one letter such a grievous trouble ? were it only about your little sisters, it would give her the greatest pleasure in the world.

I take your regard to my admonitions against plays and operas very kindly ; if you would compleat my joy, bestow some of your thoughts on God. I know that to frequent those places is no disgrace before men, but is the favour of God of no account with you ? believe me 'tis the main concern of all ; all the rest is of little moment indeed. Besides, what will even men think of your adopting maxims so contrary to mine. The duke of Burgundy, whose taste in polite sciences is unquestionable, is never seen at theatrical representations. In the whole,

whole, dear child, I like your letter very well, as does your careful mother, except that part where you mention the wax dropping on your clothes. When you write, retrench your ceremonies. Adieu, my dear son, let me frequently hear from you.



MAGDALEN DE SCUDERY, died
1601.

THE celebrated M. Costar says
of this lady, “Mademoiselle
“de Scudery has entirely out
“of her own head composed eighty
“volumes, and what I have published
“are only collections from others.”

It is to her that is owing the very commendable alteration in the system of romances, by giving more modesty to the heroines and more tenderness to the heroes, for in the preceding writings of this futile kind, the heroines were too forward, and the heroes unnaturally hard hearted.

In her *Conversations* there's a pleasant passage concerning dedications. “There
was

was a certain writer who had three epistles dedicatory for the self same book, for three persons very different in rank and merit, with a view of making use of that which would turn to the best account, and a third person negotiated the matter; accordingly he dedicated the book to the best bidder but the worst man. Another, who now rests from his labours, had prepared a dedication or rather a pompous panegyric, but the subject of it losing his places before the book was printed off, it was suppressed. It is well known that a certain country author came to Paris with a very elaborate eulogium on Richlieu, but finding him dead at his arrival, shewed his dexterity in modelling it into a panegyric on the queen, Mary Anne of Austria. There was also another, who after highly, and as justly, commending a living person, gave an opposite turn to all he had said, when the only fault was, that the person praised died before he had rewarded the author answerably to his fancied merit. Yet I think none of these come up to the artifice of one Rangouza, who having printed a collection of Letters without page or number, the binder gave the pre-

precedence according to the author's direction, so that every one to whom he presented his book, finding the letters to him taking place of all others, could not but richly acknowledge such a distinction. His Letters were justly called *Golden Letters*, as he boasted, that, one with another, they brought him near thirty pistoles each. But for a fondness for dedications, commend me likewise to an Italian physician, who dedicated every book of his commentary on Hippocrates to as many different persons, and the table of contents likewise.

Mademoiselle de Scudery was called the Sappho of the age, but this is rather a compliment to the Grecian, for the French Sappho, besides a talent of writing equally in prose and verse, had the virtue of a recluse.

Cassior hac, & non doctior illa fecit.

An odd adventure befel Mademoiselle de Scudery, on a journey with her brother. At the inn, they were to lodge in a room with two beds, and after supper fell to discourse of the process of the romance of Cyrus, which they had

then begun, and particularly how prince Mazara should be disposed of; after a pretty warm debate, it was carried that he should be assassinated. Some merchants in the next room overhearing this discourse, and concluding that these strangers were contriving the death of some great prince, whom they concealed under the sham name of Mazara, went and gave information to the governor, and thus these imaginative couple were imprisoned as projectors of realities, nor was it without a great deal of expence and difficulty that they cleared themselves so as to obtain their liberty.

EDME BOURSAULT, born 1638,
died 1701.

 HIS extraordinary person was very unfortunate in a father; he was indeed wealthy, but lavish'd away in his pleasures what was due to the education of his children; this proved a particular misfortune to Boursault. Having, in 1671, published his *Study of Sovereigns*, for the education

..H..Vof

of the dauphin; the king liked it so as to have it read to him several times, and the duke de Montausier thought the author so capable of assisting to form a great prince, that he proposed him for sub-governor to his royal highness, and nothing but his want of Latin excluded him from such an honourable and advantageous post; of such ill consequence is the neglect of parents to cultivate their childrens genius.

It is surprising, that without any knowledge of the classical languages, he attained to a perfect acquaintance with the French; for being encouraged by Tho. Corneille to stand a candidate for a seat in the academy, which has been wittily termed, *The blue ribbon of the wits*, Boursault modestly replied, What a figure should I make there, who know not a word of either Latin or Greek? This, replied Corneille, is no Latin nor Greek, but a French academy, and who understands French better than you?

Whatever he produced was of his own growth, he could not be reproached with being indebted for his wit to the Latins or Greeks, yet thus destitute of helps, before he had completed his sixteenth year,

year, several little pieces of his were very well received on the stage, and all his subsequent plays had a very uncommon run.

Boursault used to compose a weekly Gazette, with which the king and all the court were extremely entertained. Towards the close of a barren week the Gazetteer was complaining at the duke de Guise's table, that he wanted matter for his paper: Well, answered the duke, I'll tell you something, which cook'd up with your skill, will give the king and court as hearty a fit of laughter as they have had for some time. Opposite to my house lives a very noted embroiderer, whom the Capuchins had employ'd to work a St. Francis: one day a brother going there to see how the work went on, fairly fell fast asleep, and with his chin close by that of the saint; this waggish woman, who was just beginning the saint, had most artificially work'd in the capuchin's ample beard for that of the saint. You may imagine how the poor brother started and turned to find so respectable a person thus abused; however the embroiderer, after a humorous debate to whom the beard

beard now belonged, released the natural owner.

This will do indeed, said Boursault, and he put it in such a dress, that the king, and the devout queen herself, could not forbear laughing, and all the court had it by heart. But the princess's confessor, a Spanish Franciscan, rigid of himself, and egged on by the capuchins, who were all in a flame at such an indignity offered to their terrific father, soon brought her majesty to interest herself in the affair. The king said all he could that it might pass over as a jest, but the queen insisting on its being animadverted upon, he left her to do as she pleased.

Stimulated by her confessor, she directed the chancellor to revoke his privilege, and send him to the bastile till farther orders, to teach him not to jest with saints. This illustrious personage, besides his favour to men of letters, thinking the queen's anger greater than the offence, in obeying her orders took care to direct the officer to give Boursault time to write to his friends; accordingly, upon such an unexpected visit, he writ to the great Condé, his profest patron ;

G 3

who

who instantly drove away to court, and interceded with the king, who readily superseded his commitment to the Bastile; but in complaisance to the queen suppressed his Gazette, and struck off his pension of 2000 livres.

Some time after he obtain'd a privilege for a monthly Gazette of the same kind, under the title of *La muse enjouée*, for the entertainment of the dauphin; but his muse, in the wantonness of her hilarity, publishing some sarcasms against the king of England, it was thought proper, as a peace was then in agitation, to shew that the court did not countenance such freedoms, and Boursault's second privilege was taken from him, but it was withal signified to him, that this did not proceed from any change of the king's mind towards him, but from reasons of a superior nature.

Boursault's heart was no less excellent than his genius, for though Boileau had exposed him in his satyrs, when he heard that his censor was drinking the waters at Bourbon, near which place Boursault had an employment in the revenue, and that money was short with him; he immediately repaired to him with a purse
of

of two hundred Louis: Boileau struck with such undeserved generosity, begged his pardon, and offered him his sincerest friendship.

Here follows some specimens of this agreeable writer, the first is a facetious letter to a lady, on having forgot a commission from her.

MADAM,

YOU never could have thought me capable of forgetting the least of your orders, and indeed I as little thought so myself; yet with the ballett of Atis and two cravats of French point, which I hope are come safe, there's nothing of that pattern, which was the main thing. With your good spouse's leave, he tim'd his commission extremely wrong, you yourself shall be judge whether my forgetfulness be not excusable. We were engaged with the third bottle of mouth-wine [mouth-wine is a court phrase for the wine his majesty drinks] besides one of Muscadine and two of Spanish, which we were to crack, when your health going round, put him in mind to tell me that you desired me to buy somewhat for you, and that some-

what is the very thing which I have forgot to send. You make no question, Madam, but that having as yet my win about me, I embraced with transport the opportunity of such an inconsiderable service, as an earnest of my devotedness to you on any more important; and whilst my reason lasts I shall never alter; but that plaguy, insidious Spanish wine, revenged upon me all the disgraces of its countrymen since the war; and I being at St. Germain, it inferred that mine was a noddle of dignity, and that consequently muddling its brain might be of notable service to its nation. It fully gain'd its point, I frankly own it, for I do not affect to be thought a seasoned sot. I dropt asleep at table, and the sun was risen before I opened my eyes, and then so confused, that without the memento of a lusty headach, I should have had no remembrance of a drinking-bout. This is my excuse, Madam, in which M. Vieffe must bear me out. His liberality I acknowledge, but I as much complain of his injustice; and I shall desire that for the future he will be pleased to fuddle me without giving me commissions, or give me commissions without

out

but fuddling me, if you please to honour me with any, whilst he is in waiting, if I forget it never trust me again, discard me entirely; and from such a disgrace, heaven keep me, for I seriously assure you madam, that I am with the truest esteem, &c.

Letter to the archbishop of Paris, concerning a letter or dissertation in favour of the stage.

My Lord,

HAD I the honour of being better known to your grace, instead of writing this, I should have personally waited on you with my requests, that you would look upon me as the only delinquent in the printing of a letter, which I have placed before some dramatical pieces of mine, lately published; (if yet it be criminal to publish the sentiments of the fathers of the churches, concerning innocent and detestable spectacles.) A most worthy divine, whom I should not have consulted, if I had not thought him such, reproached me yesterday for publishing what he had done, merely for my private satisfaction;

and touched me in the tenderest part, charging me with a breach of trust. It is true, my lord, (nor will the due respect I bear to your grace, allow me in the least to prevaricate) that when I was in the country, where I writ *Æsop*, a well meaning priest, who probably knew no more of plays, than from his ritual, which was the bulk of his library, would by no means give me absolution, but upon a promise to consult abler persons than himself, whether the acting of it, were lawful? I thought there could not be a fitter person than my former confessor at Paris; he has an universal character for learning, understanding and piety; to him I sent not only my *Æsop*, but also several other of my plays, which I begged him seriously to examine, and for the sake of that friendship which he had so often protested to have for me, to consider, that not only the quiet of my mind, but the welfare of my soul was concerned in it. After many repeated instances, he sent me back my plays, and the letter which

* * *

my fault, and of which I cannot clear myself, is, my lord, the printing his letter with-

out

out his leave. I knew indeed, that to ask it, would have been to little purpose ; but having some other pieces in readiness for representation, and particularly *Æsop at Court*, which I am ready to submit to the gravest censor, I thought it would be a preparative to a favourable reception of them, previously to shew, that the fathers and canons which explode detestable exhibitions, did not mean to prohibit entertainments, which are not only elegant, but of a good moral tendency. This my lord, gave occasion to the letter, against which such a clamour has been raised, and this was all I meant in taking the liberty to print that letter, without the privacy of the honoured author. Nobody knows better than your grace, that since states became flourishing and stately cities were built, spectacles have been in use for the recreation of the inhabitants, and that if the primitive fathers debarred christians from being present at them, 'twas because the shews of the antients were an essential part of the Pagan religion. Those emperors, (I speak of christian emperors) whose memory is most revered, took care in-

G 6

deed,

deed, that no idolatry should be left among the spectacles, but did not abolish the spectacles themselves; the representations subsisted, but were new modelled. My lord, you can easily call to mind, that popes themselves have not thought theatrical entertainments, unbecoming the eyes of christians; they themselves making no scruple to be seen at them. Cardinal Bassarion, patriarch of Constantinople, whom Baronius mentions in his ecclesiastical annals, relates that pope Alexander III. having brought the emperor Frederic I. nick-named *Redbeard*, to an accommodation, in return for the asylum and succours received from the Venetians, granted them several privileges, and particularly the third box at the theatre, for the duke of that state. To save your grace the trouble of finding it out, I shall here quote the very original passage," *Pontifex ob beneficium a Venetis susceptum, Sebastiano duci & ejus successoribus, ac senatui Veneto privilegia concessit, and a little lower, Quod Venetorum principi, tertium sedem in theatro fieri fecit, cum prius dua tantum in papæ theatro sedes essent; quarum dextram pontifex, sinistram vero Cæsar tenebat.*

net. Baron. an. 117. Thus my lord, it is manifest, that the pope had a theatre where the chief seat was appropriated to his holiness, the second to the emperor, and a third to the duke of Venice; and what could be exhibited there more grand, and if I may so say, more useful than Corneille's or Racine's compositions? Was ever hypocrisy better exposed, than in Moliere's *Tartuffe*, and is it not to be wished, that the preachers were as successful against vice and profaneness, as he against vanity and folly. How many noblemen surrounded by artful flatterers, would never have come to a sense of themselves, or seen their defects in a true light, had they not been shewn them in the lively images of a comedy. It is not imperiousness or the up-listed arm, which can always bring mankind to reason; terrifying instructions are often found to avail less than the jocular and insinuating.

If your grace would allow me to mix something of freedom with my transcendent respect, I would inform you, that the impetuous storm, which has for some days past been conjured up against plays

plays, and of which I am the unmeaning cause, has proved like those beneficial showers which increase the earth's fertility; and that the charge brought against them has appeared so weak, that it has only served to increase and extend the desire of going to them. All their answers are not more known than they were before, or if they are, it is not to their advantage; the curiosity to read their invectives, soon brought on disgust, and that gaping; and the best effect of their writings, my lord, can be no other than a conviction of their insufficiency, and a resolution never to disgrace the press again. Is not the whole world a play? does it not swarm with creatures, who without the name of Tartuffe, are the absolute originals of the dramatic? can there be a more risible grimace, than to preach poverty amidst the wanton enjoyment of a fat benefice?

Cardinal Richlieu, that great divine, that vigilant bishop, that consummate minister, is it supposable, that such a man would openly have taken the stage into his patronage, and would have so liberally rewarded those who wrote for it, if he had conceived this entertainment

ment to be unchristian ; and can the Sorbonne to whom he was such a considerable benefactor, condemn what he approved, without casting a reproach upon his memory ? amidst all the rigours of the inquisition in Spain and Portugal, the theatre is tolerated, and were it pernicious, would it dare to shew its head in those nations, where the slightest offence against religion is often an unpardonable crime, and as such punished to the utmost. It was certainly with the greatest reason, that Tertullian, St. Cyprian, St. Chrysostom, St. Augustin, Orosius, Lactantius and Salvian, and these more respectable authorities the councils, have fulminated the spectacles of their times, for they were really abominable, and to such a degree, that the worst of libertines now a days could not bear with them ; but the modern comedy refined from those dregs, being a vehicle of prudence and morality, does not fall under those anathemas ; and if it be necessary to relieve the labours and sollicitudes of life with diversions, none can answer the end with more innocence. Did I not apprehend that I must be accountable for any of your grace's precious

cious moments on which I intrude, I would most humbly pray you my lord, to cast an eye on the play of *Æsop*, which comes along with this, that you yourself may be judged, whether there be any thing in it which may displease the nicest virtue. Ridiculing vice and folly in general, I point out no particular person; and one who sneers at a serious reproof, pleased with laughing at the follies of another, becomes circumspect in his behaviour, lest it should be his turn to be the laughing-stock. With this view, my lord, I have introduced *Æsop*, amidst variety of characters to expose their foibles and mischiefs under the unexceptionable imagery of fable. He who now presents himself for your grace's examination, is *Æsop in the country*, the next will be *Æsop at court*, a place which may stand in need of some amendment, and where the faults are more influential as coming from persons of rank and power; from thence I shall lead him about wherever his satirical presence is wanting, and shall endeavour to give that amiableness to virtue, and that ugliness to vice, which may procure them both their proper treatment. This
me-

method, my lord, shews me very far from any design to countenance licentiousness, or corrupt the world. And whilst I maintain the lawfulness of the stage. I wish I labour, that it may be innocent and instructive. If amidst all my continual guard against the least immoral slip of my pen, your grace is pleased to assign me a more serious employment, my ready obedience shall prove the submission and respect, with which, I am, &c.

In some of his letters are the following passages.—I lately read of one M. Brigonet, who, upon the death of his wife, taking orders, rose to the cardinalship, and his two sons embracing the same state of life, one of them became an archbishop, and the other a bishop. The cardinal Brigonet officiating at mass before the king, was assisted by his son the archbishop, as deacon, and by his son the bishop, as sub-deacon; what a reciprocal joy to the parent and sons! a circumstance perhaps without a parallel.

In 1585 M. de Thou, chief president of the parliament of Paris, appeared in the fourth coach, which had ever been

been seen in France; before which time, the presidents and counsellors rode on mules; the military men used horses, and when the queen came from her country palaces to Paris, it was behind her master of the horse. The quality had coaches for the conveniency of the ladies, but as they were not hung, most of them preferred riding behind a man, to such a jolting carriage; how times are altered! every petty attorney who has not his carriage, cannot forbear muttering at providence, when in M. de Thou's time, three brothers, all considerable in law-employments, had but one mule betwixt them, alluding to which, their wretched character was nick-named the *sinners guide*.

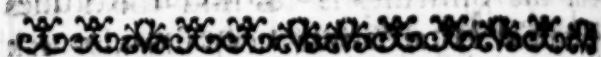
The king proposed a medal of himself weighing thirty Louis, for the best sonnet of the oddest bout-rhimes that could be chosen; upon which, whilst all the poetic tribe were at work on sonnets, a young gentlewoman composed the following epigram.

*Un cœur comme le mien ne veut point de médaille,
Sans le souverain bien tout me paroît un mal;
Promettez moi l'original,
Si vous voulez, que je travaille.*

How-

How many ways lead to grandeur! but the difficulty is to find them out. Cardinal Nitards was very singular and justifiable withal. The late queen of Spain, consort to Philip IV. took him with her into Spain, when she went to be married to that prince. She in Germany had enjoyed a decent liberty as to eating and drinking, but found things quite otherwise in Spain, where the diet of the queens is under invariable restraints, and if they are thirsty betwixt meals, a glass of water is all their refreshment. This insipid element went exceedingly against her majesty's stomach; which father Nitard a jesuit (ergo no fool) acutely observing, brought her constantly every morning, when he came to say mass, a bottle of generous wine, which he delivered into sure hands; this attention of the father so ingratiated him to the queen, that she heaped such preferments upon him, as excited the jealousy of don John of Austria, and when the Spanish grandees solicited his removal from court, she would not hear of it, unless he had the purple, and was sent ambassador extraordinary to Rome, where he died.

PHILIP



PHILIP DU BOIS, died 1694.

***** SINCE this extraordinary per-
 son has left no children whom
 the divulging his origin may
 ***** either prejudice or displease,
 and as incentives ought to be set before
 persons of low fortune, or mean extrac-
 tion, that they may be prompted to ex-
 ercise those talents, which they share equal-
 ly with the rich and noble; I shall make
 no scruple to acquaint the world, that
 the first vocation of M. du Bois, the au-
 thor of so many grave pieces, was dancing.
 It was his good fortune to be re-
 commended as dancing-master to the
 young duke of Guise, then a child,
 who took such a liking to him, that he
 would hear of no other governor. That
 a man should be possessed of quite dif-
 ferent talents, and far more valu-
 able than those which are annexed to his
 profession, is no very common thing;
 M. du Bois stimulated by the offer of
 such an honour, soon shewed himself an
 emi-

eminent instance of it; and that as it was his first business to form the body of his illustrious scholar, to graceful attitudes and regular motions; he was much better qualified to instruct him in the elegances of a moral conduct, and to inspire him with the love of virtue.

For the better discharge of his employment, he was not ashamed to begin latin in his thirtieth year; he was encouraged in it, by some of the members of Port-Royal, and as his virtuous patroness mademoiselle de Guise had held them in an implicit veneration; he submitted both his studies and conscience to their direction; under their discipline, he became an unexceptionable model of regularity, and pretty well adopted their manner of writing, the grave uniform periodical stile, but a little too simple and phlegmatic.

After a wise and successful education of his pupil, his joy in the glorious fruits of his attention was quickly blasted by the immature death of the duke, to him a most afflictive verification, that

Immodicis brevis est ætas, & rara senectus,
His

His time being now entirely his own, he betook himself to translate some pieces of St. Austin and Cicero, which he judged to be of the greatest utility, and as relief to his melancholy, nurtured by solitude, he determined to marry. He was a native of Poitiers, and chance having brought to Paris a former acquaintance of his, the widow of one of his townsmen, they accepted of each other.

As to his translations, a lady who is a great reader, once wondered to a person of literature, how it could be, that St. Austin and Cicero, born at such distant times, and writing on such different subjects, should have such a sameness of style; the person asked her where she found this sameness in the choice or disposition of the words, or in the turn of the thoughts? I find it, answered she, in M. du Bois; there Cicero and St. Austin appear to me equally two perpetual dealers in phrases, and saying every thing in the same manner.

Perhaps nothing can better evince how requisite it is to a good translation, to become as much as possible, the author

himself. To this, is the advice of lord Roscommon.

*To whom the wit of Greece and Rome was known,
And ev'ry author's merit but his own.*

Who says in his *Essay on translated Verse*,

*Examine how your humour is inclin'd,
And which the ruling passion of your mind;
Then seek a poet, who your way does bend,
And chuse an author, as you chuse a friend.
United by this sympathetic bond,
You grow familiar, intimate and fond;
Your thoughts, your words, your styles, your souls
agree,*

No longer his interpreter, but he.

A skilful translator should so far from affecting an immutable figure, know how to be as variable as Proteus. Would you know, says Boileau, why the antients make such a pitiful appearance among us? why, three fourths at least of the translators of them were either dunces or blockheads. The above delicate judge, who was bred in France, however speaks of the French translators at another rate in the same essay.

When

*When France had breath'd after intestine broils,
 And peace and conquest crown'd her foreign toils;
 There cultivated by a royal hand,
 Learning grew fast, and spread all o'er the land.
 The choicest books, that Rome or Greece have known,
 Her excellent translators made her own:
 And Europe must acknowledge that she gains.
 Both in their good example, and their pains.
 From hence our gen'rous emulation came,
 We undertook and we performed the same.*

Madame de la Fayette, who of all the women in France had the most wit, and wrote the best, used to compare a bad translator to a footman sent with a compliment from his mistress; what she had directed him to say in the most polite terms, he quite murders by his bungling rusticity in delivering it; and the more delicate the message is, the more it is sure to suffer from the ignorance of such a messenger.

Not that M. du Bois is chargeable with slighting his work, on the contrary, it has the strongest marks of attention; it is rather too much laboured: but probably his case was, that frequently despairing of equalling the orator's elocution, and more frequently disgusted

with

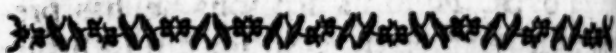
ed with that of the father, has took upon him, if I may so say, to cast them in the same mould, cloathing both in his own personal stile.

To St. Austin's sermons he has prefixed a long preface, in which he exerts all his eloquence, to prove that preachers should avoid eloquence; that the pulpit does not admit of those figures which enrapture the imagination, nor those turns by which the passions are put in a ferment; and that in a word, the gospel, so charming in its simplicity, ought to be a rule for its ministers.

As soon as this preface had gone thro' the press, and some time before it came abroad, he sent a copy of it to M. Arnaud, as to the supreme judge of his doctrine; that doctor zealous for a talent in which he excelled, published fulminating answer to M. du Bois's system of simplicity, with the title of *Reflections on the eloquence of preachers*. It was his happiness that he never saw it, death saved him the mortification of finding himself contradicted, and even confounded by his master; he had retired to Vincennes, to avoid the contagion of the purple fever, at that time very rife in

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Paris, but the contagion met with him in his recess, and seized him so violently that he expired soon after he had been brought home.



ANTOINETTE DESHOULIERES, born
1638, died 1694.

THIS lady was justly esteemed one of the finest, and withall of the most solid geniuses of her time. Her early displays of wit, her proficiency in literature, and her favour with the great, have nothing so singular as a proof she gave of that courage

*—Which dwells not in a troubled flood
Of rising spirits and fermenting blood,*

but usually flows from a steady piety, assisted by a superior judgment. Being come upon a country visit to one of her female friends, she was informed that nobody had for a long time lain in such an apartment of the seat, because of a frightful apparition which never failed to haunt it every night. *Mademoiselle Deshou-*

Deshoulières (though at that time with child) said I must lie there, I long of all things to see an apparition, if there is any such thing, or to put an end to your fears. All the intreaties of the family, and frightful stories, could not alter her purpose; in the dead of night, she heard her door pushed open, upon which she called out, but the ghost, without making any answer, came in, treading heavily, and making a dull kind of noise; soon after a table was overset, and her curtains began to stir; this was followed by the fall of a stand at her bed-side. The lady was not in the least daunted, but stretched her arms out to feel after this spectre, which she concluded, from this clutter, must be tangible, and happened to seize it by both its ears without any struggle: The length and shagreeniness of the ears put her to a stand what it could be; neither would she let go one of her holds to feel farther, lest it might get from her; and that the discovery might be compleat, in that troublesome attitude did she sit, composing in her mind an ode against fear, till the dawn of day shewed her, that what had interrupted the chearfulness of

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a worthy family, was nothing else than an old harmless dog, which not caring to lie abroad, used to come for shelter into this room as the door could not lock; then tying her garters about her captive's neck, she dressed herself, and led him in triumph to the family, who could not sufficiently admire her courage, whilst she made herself merry with their apprehensions.

It may not be displeasing to supply the want of any other particulars with translated specimens of her poetry, which shew a philosophic turn of mind. In an idyl to sheep, she addresses them thus:

*Tho' we have reason's talent, which you want,
Sheep need not envy men that useless grant.
Proud reason, tho' it makes so great a noise,
Is far from being passions counterpoise:
It yields to wine, is by a child betray'd,
And only breaks the heart, which seeks its aid.
Reason for ever impotent and sour,
Fights every thing, yet nothing can o'erpower.
Against the wolves your dog's a sure defence,
While our grand guard leaves us a prey to sense.*

and in her reflections diverser are the following lines.

How

*How very narrow is the human mind?
The finest parts in study long confin'd,
Can yet in science boast no certain ground,
Such clouds and darkness every where abound.
Learning's best light is but a fatal ray,
An ignis fatuus, leading oft astray.
Better in tranquil ignorance remain
Than trace its errors in an endless train :
These prove that what we gain by the pursuit
Is often only learning how to doubt.*

In an idyl to a book she says,

*The human heart a thousand passions feeds,
While each to guilt or to misfortune leads.
Both day and night in turns they tyrannize,
And soon destroy the spring from whence they rise.*

This contrariety in the human frame has amused many other wits : Father Sennaut says very delicately, that the soul and body are intimates, yet always at variance ; they are two enemies who cannot part, and two friends which cannot agree. There is great energy also in a passage of Balfac on this head, *Man is made of a god and a beast tied together.* In the *Republic of Cicero* there is a lively description of this slavery of the soul under the violence of contending passions :

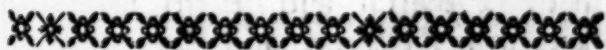
" Homo non ut a matre sed ut a no-
 " verca natura editus est in vitam cor-
 " pore nudo, fragili et infirmo, animo
 " autem anxio ad molestias, humili ad
 " timores, molli ad labores, prono ad
 " libidines, in quo tamen inesset tan-
 " quam obrutus quidam divinus ignis
 " ingenii & mentis." And elsewhere
 the same philosophic orator approves of
 the Pagan who believed, *that the birth*
of man was a punishment for some sin com-
mitted in another life. Agreeable to this
 is a thought in Aristotle, *That the union*
of the soul with the body was like the bar-
barity of tying living bodies with dead car-
casses, mouth to mouth. Euripides also
 makes Phædra thus lament the superio-
 rity of the innate enemies to virtue.

*Oft have I spent the pensive nights to know
 From whence in human life corruptions flow;
 And from these studies, this result I find,
 That men do ill from no defect of mind;
 For we are form'd sufficiently wise,
 But here the truth of this great matter lies,
 Plainly we all perceive the path to good,
 But sloth or pleasure draw us from the road.*

But neither wits, poets nor philosophers,
 came up to the picture of this conflict
 and

and servitude drawn by St. Paul in chap. vii. to the Romans.

This lady was ill of a lingering sickness, when hearing of Mr. La Fontaine's signal repentance, she conceived a high regard for the abilities of the priest who could make such devout Impressions on a temper ever thought incapable of sensibility; she sent for him to settle the affairs of her conscience, and to converse with him on divine subjects; the first she went through with the most exact regularity, and the latter with the sublimest sentiments of piety, which increased the nearer she drew to her dissolution, and her last moments were taken up in a composed declaration of her assurance of felicity.



JOHN LA FONTAINE, born 1621,
died 1695.

 HIS entertaining writer, though with a liberal education, had reach'd his twenty-second year before he had any sense of his singular talent for poetry, which disclosed itself

upon his hearing an ode of Malherbe read; he attended to it with surprise and transport; the same lyric enthusiasm which animated that ode, began to glow in his countenance, and the poetic fire which had lain concealed in him, was kindled into a blaze by that of Malherbe. He immediately set about reading that Poet, and canvassing his beauties, and soon proceeded to imitate him. His first fruits he used to communicate to a relation of his, who encouraged him, and frequently used to read with him Quintilian, Horace, and the best Latin poets. La Fontaine further improved himself by an acquaintance with the French and Italian writers, who excelled in that way, to which his genius led him, besides whom, what will hardly be imagined, Plutarch and Plato had their places in his library, and from them he drew those fine moral and political maxims with which he has strewed his Fables. For, in imitation of all celebrated writers, there was not a book which he did not turn to some use, very different from supine and ignorant writers, who neglecting to ameliorate the gifts of nature, after a few superficial pro-

productions sink into contempt; as the most exuberant fecundity of genius, without an attentive reading of the best writers, must at best be irregular, and will soon be drained.

Though his humour was exceedingly averse to any tie or confinement, such was his regard to his parents, that he suffered himself to be married; indeed the young lady's beauty and elevated genius soon gained her the liking of her insensible husband, so that he always consulted her in any considerable work. A desire of conversing with the wits was the chief motive of his removal to Paris, where the intendant Fouquet soon procured him a pension, the quarterly receipts of which he always drew in some verses, full of a grateful facetiousness.

His next rise was as gentleman to the famous Henrietta of England, but the early death of that excellent princess dash'd all his court hopes, if he was susceptible of hope. After this, among other favours from the most illustrious persons in the kingdom, the generous and witty Madam de la Sabliere provided him with an apartment and all necessaries in her own house. This lady

having once in a pet turned away all her servants, said, I have only kept my three animals, my dog, my cat, and La Fontaine.

The delights of Paris and the conversation of the prime wits, did not however hinder him from going once a year, in September, to visit Mrs. La Fontaine, always taking with him Racine, Boileau, Chapelle, or some other of the poetic class; but, that these visits might turn to some account to him, he never failed to sell some piece of land or a house, so that by his negligence and lavishment, and his wife being no better oeconomist than himself, a handsome family estate became entirely dissipated.

Never were any author's writings a juster transcript of his humour; he was plain, artless, and easy; without the least gall, or ambition; credulous, open, never taking any thing whatever amiss; and what is most singular, he lived in a long and cordial intimacy with his brethren of the quill; he seemed to take a delight in talking of their several excellencies; their oversights or faults he never mentioned but to themselves, and then only when his opinion was desired:

No

No affronts, injuries or invectives, could excite him to revenge or even complain; scarce a word came from him in company, unless with intimates, or on a very interesting subject. It is an observation in all countries, that the greatest scholars and finest writers have made but an ordinary figure in company. Rousseau, that wonderful genius, was no better at table-talk than La Fontaine, unless literature were the topic, or some entertaining altercation set his faculties afloat. Nothing can better shew the simplicity and taciturnity of our celebrated fabulist, than the following passage: Having been invited to dine at a house of distinction, for the more elegant entertainment of the guests; he fed very heartily, but not a word could be got from him, and rose from table soon after, on pretence of going to the academy, of which he had been chosen a member: It was to no purpose that all the company told him he would be too soon. *Ob!* answered he, *I'll take the longest way.* It is very remarkable, that contrary to the idea which his tales give of him, his morals were so pure, that the line of

an antient poet is perfectly applicable to him.

Laserva est nobis pagina vita proba est.

Nothing licentious, or so much as equivocal, escaped him in conversation: But the singular proof of his virtue is, that mothers used to consult him concerning the education of their daughters; and young people, who were going to act a part in the world, concerning their behaviour. In his excellent advice on these occasions, he observed the direct medium betwixt the austerity of a director and the relaxness of a worldling.

He had a son, whom after keeping at home but a short time, he recommended to the patronage of president Harlay: M. La Fontaine being one day at a house where his son was to come, did not know him again, but told the company he was a forward promising youth; and being upon this informed, that this hopeful spark was no other than his own son, he answered very unconcernedly, *Ha! truly I am glad on't.*

That apathy which so many philosophers strove to affect, run through every
part

part of his behaviour, and seemed to render him insensible even to any changes of weather; as he had a wonderful facility, he never had a particular closet for composing, but set his wits to work wherever the humour came upon him. One morning Madame de Bouillon going to Versailles, spied him deep in thought under a tree, and at her return in the evening, there was he in the very same place and attitude, though there had fallen a very cold rain the greatest part of the day; the consequences of these poetic reveries were a negligence in dress, and many laughable distractions.

Upon the death of Madam de la Sabliere, with whom he had lived upwards of twenty years, several of the English nobility were for enriching their island with this inimitable man, and made him offers, which, as they were not inferior to his merit, so they gained his regard so far, that he set about learning the English; it is true, that his indolence could not bear that difficult language; but what saved France the disgrace of losing such a man, was the liberality of the duke of Burgundy, and the emulation which the generous invitation of the English

English lords had raised in his own countrymen.

He was seized with a dangerous illness in 1692; when the priest had talked to him of religion, concerning which he had lived in an extreme carelessness, though he was far from being an infidel or a libertine, La Fontaine told him, I have lately bestowed some hours in reading the New Testament; I assure you, that it is a good book; yes, as I have a soul to be saved, it is a very good book, but there is one article which staggers me, that is, everlasting punishment; do you think that it is not against the goodness of God? His difficulty was soon levelled; and being brought to a clearer knowledge of religious truths, the priest represented to him, that he had certain intelligence of a dramatic piece of his, which had been read with universal applause, and was soon to be put in the actors hands for representation; Sir, continued he, the profession of an actor is accounted infamous by the laws, their persons are excluded from the sacraments by the church, consequently to contribute to uphold such a profane calling is wrong, and tell you I must, that I cannot

not give you absolution upon your confession, unless you promise never to deliver that piece to the actors: This appeared too rigid, and La Fontaine appealed to the Sorbonne; his extraordinary character, and the importance of the case, drew a deputation of that learned body to him, who certified him, that his priest had told him only the truth, without any exaggeration, and that the stage had been in all ages condemned by the church; upon which this sincere penitent immediately threw the piece into the fire, without so much as keeping a copy.

The priest afterwards laid before him the evil tendency of his *Fables*; these, Sir, said he, you own have already seen several editions, and that there is another actually in the press in Holland, from which some emolument accrues to you; thus, whilst the French language subsists, they will continue to be a most dangerous seducement to vice: Now, Sir, the sacraments cannot be admitted to you, but upon two conditions; the one, that if it be found necessary to administer the sacrament to you in your illness, you make a public acknowledgment of your fault at receiving; and if you recover

cover your health, also at your first appearance in the academy; the other, that you are not to receive any pecuniary advantage from the sale or printing of that book, but as much as in you lies hinder and oppose it.

M. La Fontaine could not digest this publick penance, saying, that he could not conceive his book to be so pestiferous, though he would not pretend to justify it; he protested that the writing of the book made no manner of bad impressions on him, and he could not see how the reading of it should pollute the minds; however, the eloquent priest having brought him to a full sense of the guilt of the composition, and the offence given to the church in the publication of it, he promised to comply with any conditions, to shew the sincerity of his repentance.

His distemper increasing, it was thought proper that he should receive the holy *Viaticum*, and at the direction of his priest, he readily consented that a deputation of the academy should be desired in his name to attend at his solemn repentance. Accordingly on the following day the members of the academy repaired.

repaired to the parish church, and from thence, together with many other persons of rank and merit, followed the sacrament to the chamber of this famous patient; who without any exhortation, addressed himself in the following manner to the priest, who had all along attended him; Sir, I have desired the gentlemen of the academy, of which I have the honour to be a member, to assist by deputies at what I am going to do. It is but too well known that I am the miserable author of a book of infamous tales: In composing it, I did not think it to be a book of any pernicious tendency; but my eyes have been opened, and I allow it to be a most abominable composition, I am filled with grief that ever I writ and published it. I beg pardon of God, of the church, of you, Sir, its minister, of you Gentlemen of the academy, and of all here present: It is my hearty wish that this book had never come from my pen, and that I could totally suppress it: I solemnly promise in the presence of God, whom, though unworthy and vile, I am now to receive, that I will never contribute to the sale or impression thereof: I actually and for ever

ever renounce all the profit coming to me from a new edition revised by me, which is now by my wretched approbation printing in Holland : If God restores me to health, I hope he will assist me in the full and due performance of the vow I now make, of spending the remainder of my life in penitential exercises, to the utmost of the ability of my bodily strength, and to devote my poetry only to devout compositions : It is my request, gentlemen, (turning towards the academicians) that you would report to the academy what you have now been witnesses of. Afterwards he received the holy *Viaticum*, with all the signs of a holy contrition.

This act of devotion was not long without a temporal recompence, for that very afternoon a gentleman came to M. La Fontaine from the duke of Burgundy, then but 11 years old, with a message that the young prince had heard with a great deal of joy, of his last repentance, that it could not fail of doing him honour before men and obtaining mercy from God, but that as it hurt his purse, the prince thinking it hard any one should be the poorer for doing his duty, he sent him

him fifty *Louis*, which was all he had left of his privy purse allowance for that month, and that if the present had been larger his pleasure would have been the greater. M. La Fontaine lived two years after this, and in a manner entirely conformable to the protestation made in his illness, and which he had renewed at his first appearance in the academy.

The unaccountable character of M. La Fontaine before his conversion, appears very strongly in the following passages. Some of his Parisian friends urged him to go and be reconciled to Mrs. La Fontaine, that it was a shame to separate himself from a woman of such merit; accordingly he sets out in the stage coach, and being arrived at the town, goes and enquires for his wife. The servant not knowing him, answered her mistress was gone to church. Upon this he walked away to an acquaintance, with whom having spent two or three merry days, he took the return of the coach without any further thoughts of his wife; and when his friends enquired about his reconciliation, he answered, I have been to see my wife, but was told she was at church.

Racine

Racine once carried La Fontaine to the *Tenebræ* *, and perceiving that the service lasted too long for him, he gave him a volume of the bible, in which were the lesser prophets; La Fontaine happened to open the book at the prayer of the Jews in Baruch, read it over and over with such admiration, that he could not forbear whispering to Racine; This Baruch was a fine writer, do you know any thing of him? and for some days after, if he chanced to meet with any person of letters, after the usual compliments, his question was, Have you ever read Baruch? there's a first rate genius; and this so loud, that every one near might hear him.

Rabelais, whom Boileau used to call *Reason in masquerade*, was La Fontaine's idol: Being once with Boileau, Racine, and other men of note, among which were some ecclesiastics, St. Austin was talked of for a long time, and with the

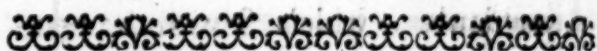
* A service in the church of Rome on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, before Easter, in representation of the agony of Christ in the garden.

highest commendations; La Fontaine listen'd with his natural air, which was far from being the most promising; at last, as waking out of a sound sleep, he with the greatest seriousness, asked one of the ecclesiastics, Whether he thought St. Austin had more wit than Rabelais? The doctor, eying La Fontaine from head to foot, only answered, *How's that, M. La Fontaine? you have put on one of your stockings the wrong side outward; as he actually had done.*

A particular, which shews the common predicament of La Fontaine, is, that the nurse who attended him in his illness, observing the fervour of the priest in his exhortations, said to him, *Ab! good Sir, don't plague him so, he is rather stupid than wicked; and another time, God won't have the heart to damn him.* M. Fontenelle has said, it was through stupidity that La Fontaine preferred the fables of the antients to his; and in the opinion of another wit, La Fontaine was less than man with men, and more than man with beasts.

To conclude with a circumstance greatly to his honour; La Fontaine's widow being molested about the payment

ment of some public moneys, the intendant gave orders that no tax or impost should be levy'd upon M. La Fontaine's family; and none of the succeeding intendants have offered to revoke such a distinguishing favour. His descendants carefully preserve the original instrument, which redounds no less to the honour of the magistrate who granted it, than to the poet to whom it was granted.



LEWIS BOURDALOUE, born 1632,
died 1704.

✱✱✱✱ HIS eminent servant of God
✱ T ✱ was admitted into the order of
✱ ✱ Jesuits at the age of 15, by
✱✱✱✱ his own intreaties to his father.

Having many years signalised himself as a philosopher in the schools, and as a divine in the pulpit, he was sent for to Paris; here providence opened an ample field for the exercise of his zeal and talents; the church where he preached was thronged with crouds of the most distinguished persons of both sexes in
court

court and city. Such a sudden reputation is apt to degenerate, but it was far from being so with F. Bourdaloue, the oftener any one heard him the more desirous were they of hearing him again; he preached thirty-four years at court and in Paris, and what is the attainment of very few, during the whole time he was equally liked by the great, the learned, and the commonality; however extraordinary, this will not appear surprising, his eloquence being strongly marked with nature and reason, qualities which please all tastes, in all places, and at all times.

Such great numbers moved with the fervor and solidity of his preaching, requested him to take their souls into his care, and be the director of their consciences, that he could not decline it, though a laborious and delicate task; or rather he rejoiced to compleat in the confessional what he had only sketched in the pulpit. He frequently sat five or six hours in the confessional, a patience to which nothing but an ardent zeal for the good of souls could reconcile a vivacity like his. Whether he was sent for to religious houses, or to attend the sick, or any came to him for spiritual advice,

advice, he was never seen to spare himself, being ready for any one, and becoming all things to all men. Amidst the many persons of wealth and rank to whom he was director, he did not overlook the low and poor: He strove by the most condescending sweetness to remove their timidity, he sympathised with every spiritual and temporal distress, and entered into the smallest particulars of their lives; nor was such a gracious reception all, he would go amidst the most squalid scenes of worldly wretchedness to those who were not able to come to him; his very presence was a cordial, besides his beneficence and advice, and he always left them equally charmed with his meekness, wisdom, and charity. If any valuable talent was particular in F. Bourdaloue, it was that of properly acquainting persons of the approach of death, and supporting them under that awful summons; this last duty of a solid and christian friendship he has performed to innumerable persons, respectable by their birth and personal merit, and endeared to him by an intimacy of several years.

Affiduous

Affiduous for the benefit of others, this excellent man did not neglect himself, having frequent returns of a very strict self-inspection, which he was sensible the splendor of his reputation, and the importance of his various offices, rendered the more necessary. His apostolic piety was adorned with every gentlemanly embellishment, a graceful countenance and easy carriage, urbanity, sagacity in affairs, and modesty in declaring his opinion; amiable in all parts of life, that the pleasure he gave in company was scarce inferior to the rapturous admiration which he never failed to raise in the pulpit. Persons of the most exalted stations made it a kind of merit to be acquainted with F. Bourdaloue.

A decay of strength putting him in mind of a wise maxim, that there ought to be an interval betwixt the affairs of this world and our departure out of it, he formed a design of retiring to a house of the order in the country, there to labour wholly after his perfection; his superiors opposed it, and he had no better success with the father provincial of the order; but this holy desire increasing, he renewed his requests the

next year to the father-general, in the following letter.

Most reverend Father,

GOD inspires, even urges me, to request with all humility, but with all earnestness, that you would be pleased to grant me what all my endeavours have not been able to obtain from the reverend father provincial. It is fifty-two years since I have lived in the company, not for myself but others, at least more for others than myself: A thousand distractions daily occur, and hinder me from labouring after my perfection, which yet is the one thing needful, with the intenseness I would; I long to retire, that I may lead a more quiet life, more quiet that it may be more regular and holy; I feel my body hastening apace towards its dissolution, my course is near finished, and would to God I could add, I have fought the good fight; I am now at an age which unfits me for preaching: May I be allowed, I conjure you, to lay out the remainder of my life entirely for God and myself, and thus prepare for a death becoming a Religious. The place of my recess I
leave

leave to the superiors, only that it be at a distance from Paris, there remote from the intrusions of the world, there discharged of every other care, I shall give myself up to a penitent recollection of my past life, and strenuously press forward to my perfection. This is the supreme wish of, &c.

The father-general's answer left the matter to his own choice, so that he had appointed a day for his removal; but his superiors who had at first opposed his design, stretched their authority so far as to suspend his departure till an answer came from Rome to the fresh remonstrances which they had sent thither; and they were so prevalent, that the former permission was revoked, and F. Bourdaloue ordered to continue in his usual functions: He not only submitted to an injunction so contrary to his passionate desire, and which at once blasted all his glorious ideas of devout retirement, but he seemed to return to the charge with redoubled vigour.

However, as he said, his course was near finished; for soon after he was taken ill, and on whitsunday after having officiated

ciated under all the torture of a fever, he was put to bed. When the approach of death was intimated to him, without waiting till the person had concluded, he made answer, *'Tis well, I understand you, now I must do what I have so often preached and exhorted others to: I have abused life, I deserve, O God! to be deprived of it, and willingly yield myself to thy chastisements.* Accordingly, after two days sickness spent in the most religious manner, the violence of his fever, attended with a delirium, put an end to the earthly being of F. Bourdaloue, than whom France never produced a more useful ecclesiastic, or a more exemplary christian.

To this account of F. Bourdaloue, I shall add a specimen or two of his sermons preached at court; in that on a *false conscience*, is the following paragraph.

“ I have even said, that the court is more particularly the place where a false conscience is most common, and consequently most difficult to be guarded against; which you yourselves cannot deny; 'tis at court where passions act in their full force, where desires burn fiercest, where

where the baits are most alluring, consequently 'tis the element of danger, where the purest consciences are most liable to be adulterated, and the most discerning to be blinded; 'tis at court where impatience after favour, anxiety to preserve it, a thirst after promotion, fear of displeasing, and artifice in pleasing, form those consciences, which, how fashionable soever there, in every other place are accounted monstrous; 'tis at court where only by a bare attendance, without mingling in its intrigues, the mind is warped aside from its natural rectitude; the court language, in its very air is infectious; the daily sight of vice in all its shapes, lessens your horror of it; then from palliating you proceed to justify it, and thus the conscience insensibly sinks from light into darkness, miserable darkness; dreadful alienation from christianism!

You'll say, and your behaviour seems as if you really thought so, that the court-religion differs in many points from that to which the rest of the world are bound; that its precepts are more relax, and that the courtier is allowed an amplitude and freedom of conscience, which

is not to be tolerated in others ; and that you take the utmost extent of your allowance, is manifest from a saying in every body's mouth, *That a courtier talking of conscience, is as little to be believed as when he sets up for disinterestedness.* Yet, my dear auditory, St. Paul assures us there is but one God and one Faith, and woe be to him that divides that one God, by representing him indulgent to the court and severe to the world, or who divides that one faith, by accommodating it to conditions ; let him be accursed, brethren, said that great apostle, who shall preach to you any other gospel than that which I have preached to you, be he accursed, though he were an angel from heaven ; so courtiers, I must tell you, let him be accursed who shall ever dare to tell you that there are any other laws of conscience for you than those very same by which the meanest of the people are to be judged. Alas ! what are worldly distinctions in the sight of God ; further let him be accursed who shall be afraid to declare to you, that these universal indispensable laws should strike you with the greater terror, being most inclined

inclined and most exposed to shake off their restraint."

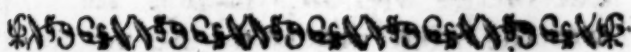
That on *Holiness* concludes with an address to the king, as is customary in court-sermons.

" This holiness concerns every individual now present ; but, Sir, in preaching it to your majesty, I have the comfort to know that the goodness and elevation of your heart engages your favourable attention, and gives you a delicious relish of it ; for I speak to a king, whose distinguished character it is to have brought every thing to be possible, and even easy, when called to enterprizes either for the honour of his crown, or the advancement of religion. I speak to a king, who has triumphed over the enemies of the state by prodigies of valour which will put posterity to a stand, they being much more true than credible, and who is reducing the enemies of the church by prodigies of zeal, which, though we see, we can scarce believe, so far do they surpass our expectations. I speak to a king, raised up and chosen by God for things which his august ancestors durst never project ; to design, to conduct and finish, is a

to which he alone was equal : That zeal for the cause of God, Sir, is the sanctification of kings, 'tis the utmost talent of your glorious course ; for since your majesty is above all that is great in this world, since your power and glory admit of no increment, nothing remained but to devote your life and heroism, your power and glory, to God, by exalting religion on the ruins of heresy.

God has by your birth, Sir, bestowed on you the most flourishing kingdom upon earth, and another infinitely more glorious he has in readiness for you, the kingdom of his elect. To both these kingdoms your majesty is related, but with this difference, that the first is to be considered as the subject of your duties, and the latter as the reward of your virtues. Now, the secret of reconciling them, that is, of well-governing the one and obtaining the other, is no where to be learnt so well as in the maxims of christian holiness : By it, says the scripture, princes exercise over their subjects that absolute power which God has put into their hands ; by it sovereigns acquit themselves of the duties prescribed them by God towards their subjects : In a word,

word, by it, by christian holiness only, are kings the images of God, his servants, or so much as the men of God: These things, Sir, God tells you by my mouth, and has repeated to you during the several years that I have had the honour to be his messenger to you: Your majesty has open'd your heart to his holy word, you have venerated it as the word of the Most High, the King of kings: Blessed prince! it will be to you a word of life and eternal felicity, which is my ardent prayer."——



STEPHEN PAVILLON, died 1705.

 HE bar was the first field where this gentleman signalised himself, with such success, that he never lost a cause, and became advocate-general in the parliament of Metz; upon the reputation of his abilities cardinal Mazarine sent for him, intending to make him advocate-general in the parliament of Paris; but perceiving that he was not to be moulded into that servile plianthness which that minister

expected from all his dependants, he was left in his former station.

The name of this celebrated minister will justify the short digression of a few passages not generally known.

He used to say of Lewis XIV when young, *That there was in him wherewith to make four kings and an honest man.* That prince had just reached his teens, when he won a large sum of the chevalier de Rohan, who offered him Spanish pistoles; the king refused to take them; upon which the chevalier threw them out of the window, saying, that that was the fittest way to dispose of them, since they had been rejected by the king, and paid his losings in Louis. The cardinal took the opportunity to give him this fine reproof; The chevalier de Rohan has acted like a king, and the king has acted like a Chevalier.

The cardinal had three maxims, 1. Never to entrust an affair, an enterprize, or the command of an army, to unfortunate persons. Whether a person, said he, has capacity, birth, or riches, is not the point with me, but his good fortune; for with all these advantages, he'll miscarry if he has not good fortune on his side.

side. 2. To dissemble in every thing with the great, and to keep his promises to them no farther than his own interest required. 3. That riches were requisite to success. 'Twas a saying of his, *A rich man, tho' born in a hogsty, will every where be regarded beyond a poor man of quality. Riches carry all before them, and without riches the best projects come to nothing.*

The Dutchess of Mazarine says in her *Memoirs*, that the cardinal perceiving her want of devotion, told her, If you won't attend mass for God, do it out of regard to the world. This should not bring the cardinal's religion into suspicion; are not human motives employ'd in the cause of devotion, where the deaf ear is turn'd to counsels merely spiritual? Was that mother to blame, who dehorting her daughter from levity, told her, *That if God pardoned every thing, the world excused nothing.*

He used to say, that he would multiply the dignity of duke and peer, that a man of quality would equally be ashamed of being, or of not being one.

To return to M. Pavillon, who from this incident and some family-losses, despairing

spairing of ever making a large fortune, and a scanty one little suiting his temper, he disposed of his place as advocate-general in the parliament of Metz, and removed to Paris for the pleasures of freedom and conversation.

His admittance into the academy was something singular; the assembly being irreconcilably divided betwixt two persons, M. Pavillon happen'd to be named; upon which, the opposite parties closed without hesitation, and he was elected with a general applause. Though a seat in the academy be accounted the summit of literary honour, it has not escaped the lash of the satyrist abbé Freron; who represents abbé Cotin in one of his walks in the Elysian fields, meeting with a shade fast asleep at the foot of a tree, with some books by him, to the reading of which he imputed its somnolence; however, promising himself some pleasure in the conversation of a ghost of letters, with much pulling and hawling he made a shift to awaken him, and immediately excused his roughness as proceeding from a desire of his acquaintance: This was so agreeable a compliment, that without any further preamble

preamble the ghost related to him a dream, which was the natural result of what he had been reading. “ After wandering
“ along a river just like our Seine, I
“ came to the palace of the sun (the
“ Louvre, where the French academy
“ meets.) If I admired its stately colonades, I was no less surprised that
“ a roof had not been bestowed on
“ such a superb edifice. Being fond of
“ horses, I asked a coachman, who
“ stood with a whip in his hand, where
“ his lord’s horses were? Over and
“ above the four car-horses, answered
“ he, forty others are often to be seen
“ here, [the academy consists of forty
“ members besides the honorary] and
“ ’tis part of my care to bring them
“ together and turn them loose again
“ at proper hours; at this he threw
“ open the gates of a spacious riding-
“ house.—Bless me! said I, what can
“ be the use of those forty coursers, are
“ they for relays to Coüs, Pyroïs, Æton
“ and Phlegon, [the names of the sun’s
“ horses.] No, reply’d he, they are
“ of no use, they neither draw nor carry,
“ they parade now and then; those
“ whom you see so fine with their rib-
“ bons

“bons seldom raise any dust here;
 “observe, some of them how proud
 “they are of their rich trappings, em-
 “belished with pieces of silver like
 “counters, [alluding to the silver coun-
 “ters given at the academy to the
 “members who come in due time to
 “their stated meetings.] ’Tis pity that
 “most of them are hard mouth’d, nei-
 “ther do they feel the spur; several
 “trot very heavily, though they have
 “been train’d up to all paces; they
 “drink a very sweet kind of water;
 “their litter is of dried laurel, and their
 “elegant stable exhales only the odour
 “of incense.”

This academy was, from a private
 meeting of men of letters, by cardinal
 Richlieu’s means, and contrary to their
 own desire, established by the king’s
 edict in 1635, for the refinement of the
 French language: Thus, its origin is
 not very different from that of the *Humorists*
 at Rome, which begun at the
 wedding of Lorenzo Mancini, a Ro-
 man gentleman. Several of the guests,
 to heighten the entertainment, spoke
 sonnets, farces and orations, first extem-
 porary and afterwards promeditated;

this

this frolic gained them the name of *Belli Humori*, and the performers pleased with each other's compositions, by degrees grew so in love with these exercises of genius, that they formed themselves into an academy, with the appellation of *Humoristi*, their device being a cloud, which often condensed by saline exhalations from the sea, drops down again in a fresh misting shower, with this motto from Lucretius, *Redit agmine dulci*.

Some of its more remarkable statutes are, That no member shall answer any writing against the academy without permission; of which there are few or no instances, that body having, at first, resolved against altercations of any kind: No piece of divinity comes under their cognisance, only as to the terms and form: Every academician, upon his admission, subscribes a promise upon his honour, to pay no regard to any solicitations whatsoever, to preserve his suffrage free from any prior engagement, in order to give it on the day of election to the most worthy; and such signature is accounted of equal obligation with an oath. The academy judges only the
com.

compositions of its own members, and if any important reason obliges it to examine any other, it simply declares its opinion without an express censure or approbation. The seal of the academy is the image of its founder, with this inscription, ARMAND CARDINAL DUC DE RICHELIEU protecteur de l'academie Françoise établie en l'an 1635; it has also a counter-seal representing a crown of laurel, inclosing these words, A L'IMMORTALITE'. It is remarkable, that its patent was not registred by the parliament of Paris till above a year after its grant, so jealous were they of every thing which came from the cardinal de Richlieu; and even then with this restriction, *Provided that this assembly or academy shall confine themselves to the refinement, decoration, and improvement of the French language, and to the works of its members, or of such persons who shall desire their examination.* A very honourable instance of this academy's adherence to their statutes must not be omitted. A domestic to a person of the first rank obtained the Dauphin's interest for a seat; that prince ordered the lord-keeper to urge the matter strenuously; accordingly,

ingly, on the election day, this lord, though under a violent fit of the gout, came from Versailles to the academy; yet could not his own eloquence, nor the name of a beloved prince, for whom every academician would have freely laid down his life, obtain their votes for an exceptionable candidate: So far was the Dauphin from resenting the repulse, that he publicly commended their firmness.

The academies in Italy seem to anticipate all satyr by their appellations, as the *Addormentati*, the *Caliginosi*, the *Oi-tusi*, the *Fantastici*, and the general rules of the *Intronati* or *Stupified* at Naples are far from stupidity, and comprised in the six following, 1. To pray. 2. To study. 3. To be chearful. 4. To offend no body. 5. Not to be easy of belief. 6. Not to mind the world.

The beauty of M. Pavillon's mind and heart (for he was no less the man of religion than of wit) drew many eminent courtiers frequently to visit him; he was even offered, nay strongly solicited, by the great Bossuet, to be governor to one of the royal family, but accustomed to a philosophic freedom, he

he declined that tempting proposal; his refusal however was so far from giving offence, that a pension was settled upon him. This amiable philosopher never failed to exhilarate the austere and awe the licentious; he adapted himself to all as far as virtue would permit, so that he had the regular and the beau, the scholar and the poet for his visitors; conversing, when under the severest fits of the gout, with the most complaisance and serenity; and with the same equable temper went through the pains of a lingering death.

His works, which may be called moral and entertaining, make two 12mo volumes; and for a taste of them, I shall add three short pieces.

Taciturnity preferable to Eloquence.

IT is surprising, that amidst such a multitude of rules only teaching men to speak, none have been laid down to teach them silence: Yet the one requires much more skill than the other, nature prompting us to speak, whereas silence is a kind of restraint upon it. How many are great talkers, or great orators, if that sounds better, in comparison of the silentious. We have the

art

art of saying much on a little, whereas we rather want the art of saying a great deal in a little. What is rhetoric with all its boasted figures? an ignorant woman, moved by strong passions, is as energetic as Cicero; true, she does not, like Cicero, know the names of the several figures which her emotion has employed. A mighty science this, after a laborious study of rhetoric. But the art of silence is quite another thing, not taught by passion, but by vigilance and reason; and how much harder it is to comply with the precepts of the latter than of the former, need not be said. A man who is silent, reasons; but a man very often talks fluently without any reasoning. As to the women, they have naturally voluble tongues, but to their ratiocination no great deference was ever paid. Both in antient and modern history one meets every where with orators, nothing more common in them than men who talked a great deal, and talked well; but as to the glorious epithet of *silent*, one man alone has occurred to me, on whom it was conferred; and it must be own'd, that he acted up to it: He was at the head of one of the greatest

greatest designs perhaps ever executed; I mean William prince of Orange, who made such a stand against Spain and founded the commonwealth of the united provinces. Cardinal Granville, a Spanish statesman, knew the importance of this person's taciturnity, for upon receiving advice that the counts Egmont and Horn were apprehended, he asked whether the *silent man* also was taken, and being answered in the negative, he replied, *Ab! then nothing is done.* Those speakers, Cicero and Demosthenes, with their torrents of eloquence, were they ever so much dreaded by their enemies? the licentiousness of their tongues brought them to none of the most desirable ends and I believe their last words were a curse upon all the former. What a laudable exertion of wisdom was it, that a whole nation should agree to a sparingness in speech; I mean the Spartans who in their concise stile have said more fine things than all the loquacious Athenians; and that when the redoubted Philip of Macedon demanded a passage for his troops through their territories, to the laboured speech of his ambassador on that head, all the answer was No

No

Now what could the mellifluous orators of Athens have framed more expressive and sublime, than that bold *No*. Let us try to recover this art of taciturnity, examples in all attempts are encouraging, 'tis one of the best secrets of antiquity, and now totally lost, lost without any concern: We could better have spared their brass statues and marble monuments, yet what a rout is kept about these among the virtuosos, though it would puzzle their delicate brains to point out any substantial utility in the greatest part of them.

The Art of Taciturnity in Women.

Here's a bold chapter; I expect the title only will raise a general hooting; *the art of taciturnity in women*, why that's even as much as to say, *the art of immortality*; however, I'll stand all the sneers of the town, and try if I cannot prevail something with the garrulous tribe. First, it would be no small matter if they could be brought not to speak all together: Amazing is their facility in talking continually, without listening to each other; to reply to what one has not heard requires a marvellous readi-

readiness of conception. If any one happen to forbear till another has done, what a confusion do her looks betray, her eyes sparkle with impatience at the restraint of her tongue: The attention of a single minute is an excruciating uneasiness to many, but when once the talk is come into their hands, they don't easily let go their hold: Such as these, I give over as incurables; but the other, were it only to save so many burning hearts and ill looks, should, for the general quiet, agree to speak alternately. Why do they so easily forgive inattention to what they say; and if they would be heard, why don't they also hear? Is it to ease their tongue of some acrid humour that they gabble so impetuously. A second point of no less consequence than the former, if I could be so lucky as to persuade them to it, is be to very sparing of repetitions. If a woman has heard or seen any thing notable, an intrigue, or an ill contrived dress, and whilst the idea is recent in her mind receives a dozen successive visits, there must be a dozen descriptions of it, all equally diffuse and animated. I have known not a few who would ramble away a whole day

day from house to house, only for the sake of spreading some merry story, with their own improvements: In a good hour were they, whom they missed, from home. But if I might presume to meddle with names and fashions, amours and parrots, and the inexhaustible source of female conversation, I would say, that were these never be brought upon the carpet, the tattlers would be effectually reduced to have more sense than is usually found in them, or to a silence, which is more akin to it than that unbridled dexterity in haranguing on every trifle. But how? would you have them bury their favourite talent of surveying a person from head to foot in the twinkling of an eye, of guessing the price of whatever comes in their way, of remembering the number and kind of the dresses of the beau monde, with the several articles of their public conduct and domestic management? Indeed to relinquish such valuable attainments is so mortifying a task, that I chuse to betake myself to the taciturnity which I recommend, than preach to no purpose.

A

A Love-Gazette.

From the island of Passions; 1st of the month of Inclination, 1698.

A Ship from *Port-Hope* brings advice, that the inhabitants of that island are revolted in the city of *Love*, the capital, and that after mastering the citadel of *Reason*, where they destroy'd the works and burnt the magazines, they had forced the governor, the duke of *Good-sense*, to retire into *Jealousy-tower*. It is added, that the wives, animated by their husbands example, had besieged the governor in that fortress, and brought him to a capitulation, by which not only the said tower is to be demolished, but that *Fort-Virtue*, a stately ancient structure built on a rock, shall be entirely razed, as a mark of slavery, and a check upon the liberties of a free people.

From the city of Beauty, the 18th of the month Attachment.

On the 3d the states met, when the session was opened by *M. Coquet*, intendant of the finances, in a speech full of pretty verses and soft sentiments. The *Allurements*

lurements answered him with a sweetness which was very acceptable to him, especially the promise that their city would furnish a million and a half of *ogles*, towards the war against the *Insensibles*, and expedite the levy of a regiment of *Cbarms* for the service of *Love*: It is reported, that before the assembly rises, the above sagacious intendant will erect an office of *Billets doux*, and lay a tax of a thousand *kisses* per diem, for the maintenance of so many *Languors* which he designs for our garrison.

From the district of Portion, the 14th of the month Fortunate.

We are greatly alarmed here at the march of general *Interest*, who is advancing with an indefatigable corps of forty thousand feigned *Transports*, insidious *Stratagems*, and artificial *Fires*. *Love* is following him with a large body of forced *Complaisances*, and has withdrawn his forces of *Attachments* and *Affiduities*, which were cantoned in the towns of the provinces of *Fine-face* and *Merit*; these being deserted, were soon ravaged by the *Infidels*, who are now in full march to-

wards the district of *Portion*, to make an inroad in conjunction with *Interest*.

From the camp before Cruelty, the 8th of the month Despair.

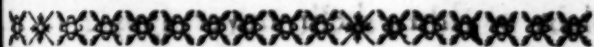
The besieged made a sally on the night of the 14th, with five hundred *Provoked-looks*, demolished the enemies works, killed three hundred of *Zeal's* regiment and nailed up two small cannons called *jobs*; but the following night the colonel *Handsomness* and *Address* mounting the trenches, vigorously assaulted the half moon *rigour*, which defends the gate beat and drove into the town the *Digdains* which were posted on it, while at the same time a battery of eight fifteen thirty pounders play'd on it very successfully, and made such a wide breach, that the city was obliged to capitulate. The marquis *Profusion* and *M. Gift* are appointed to draw up the articles.

From the republic of Enjoyment, the 18th of the month Delights.

At a late meeting of the senate it was resolved to demolish the huge tower of *Shame*, which princess *Pudicity* had ordered

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dered to be built as a security to the town: The said princess was also declared an enemy to the state, and as such, was ordered to depart the republic without any delay, on pain of being trampled to death by the *bugs* and *romps*, of whom the mob consists. A proclamation was also issued, that the inhabitants, which are the tribes *Indulgences*, *Careffes* and *Levities*, prepare for welcoming general *Jollity*, who has fixt the critical minute of next *Friday* for his public entry.



NICHOLAS BOILEAU DESPREAUX,
born 1630, died 1711.

HIS celebrated writer was born at his father's villa, not far from Paris, and by way of distinction was surnamed Despreaux, from a little meadow adjoining to the garden. In his childhood he underwent the operation for the stone, which being unskilfully performed, proved a very troublesome inconvenience to him during his whole life; which, with his being

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lodged in a loft over the garret, made him say in his advanced years, that he would not accept of another life upon such painful and contemptible beginnings: In time a place was fitted up for him in the garret, and in allusion to this removal he used to say, that *his coming down into the garret, was the first step of his advancement.* The simplicity of his countenance and his harmless behaviour took so with his father, that he would point to him as a pattern for his malapert brothers, saying, There's Colin, nobody will ever have any cause to complain of him, he'll never speak ill of any one.

When Boileau was in the third form of the college of Beauvais, the master discovered the richness of his poetic vein, and publicly declared, that he would acquire a very distinguished reputation that way, being persuaded that disposition is connected with the talent, and that whoever is born a poet becomes one. From humanity and philosophy his guardians (for he was deprived of his parents) put him upon studying the law; but with the most advantageous qualities for shining at the bar, he had little of the
main

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main requisite, inclination; to combat truth, to vindicate falshood, to deceive by obliquities, was what his natural candour could not bear: He left it for the Sorbonne, where he propos'd to himself a sublime satisfaction in going through a course of divinity, but the barbarisms, chicanery and spinosities, with which the most sacred and important subjects are bandied to and fro, shocked him so, that he turned his back upon the college with more disgust than upon the hall.

His genius having declared itself for poetry, and of the satyric kind, he did not print his productions, but repeated them in select companies who sent him invitations.

To the following episode of sloth, in his *Lutrin*, our rising poet owes all the happy consequences of being sent for to court.

*Ah! whither fled those happy times of peace,
When idle kings, dissolv'd in thoughtless ease,
Resign'd their scepters and the toils of state
To counts, or some inferior magistrate?
Loll'd on their thrones, devoid of care and pain,
And nodding slumber'd out a lazy reign.
No anxious schemes did nigh the palace creep,
But day and night were one continued sleep:*

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Except the vernal month, when *Flora* gilds
The blooming valleys and the verdant hills,
When the bleak north his boist'rous rule resigns
To tepid zephers and more gentle minds,
Four oxen drew, with slow and silent feet,
Th' inactive monarch to some country seat.
But oh how chang'd! that golden age is gone,
A prince of spirit sits on *Gallia's* throne;
Each day he frights me with the noise of arms,
Shuns my allurements and contemns my charms.
In vain does nature, seas, and rocks oppose
To bar his courage; it undaunted goes
O'er seas and rocks, 'midst burning heats and
snows.

*His name alone my listle's subjects dread,
Not even his cannon can more terror spread.*

This fiction had a decisive success; the king was for seeing his ingenious encomiast, and ordered M. Colbert to bring him to court: Accordingly, within a few days, the duke de Vivonne introduced him. He read to the king part of the *Lutrin*, which had not then appeared, and some other pieces; all which pleased his majesty mightily; who also asking him, what particular part of his poems he liked best, he begged to be excused from such a judgment, adding, that an author was an improper appraiser of his own works. No matter, said

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said the king, I will know your opinion.
Upon which he answered, that they were
the close of an epistle which he had taken
the liberty to inscribe to his majesty,
and read the forty-three following lines,
Epistle I.

While far from battles, in a softer strain,
I'll sing the tranquil blessings of thy reign.
The joys, the smiles, the graces and the sports,
The pompous festivals and splendid courts,
Shew how the oppressor trembles in his turn,
And mourns himself who made the people mourn :
How thy wise cares for all our wants provide, }
How hungry dearth with plenty is supply'd, }
And how thy hand suppress'd licentious pride; }
Abuses how reform'd, the laws obey'd,
Arts how improv'd, and how encourag'd trade;
How easily thy revenue's enlarg'd,
Rich tho' the prince, the people not o'ercharg'd;
How griping farmers for their rapine bleed,
And France has been from hated Gabels free'd:
The soldiery, laborious and discreet,
Their manners humble, as their service great :
Our rude artificers industrious grown,
And all our superfluities our own.
No more by foreign tributes are we griev'd,
Which from our luxury alien arts receiv'd.
Sometimes I'd sing thy mighty works in peace,
The high amusements of a heroe's ease,
What plan of pompous structure thou hast trac'd,
What temples thou'st adorn'd, what structures
rais'd.

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*Amaz'd, methinks I see divided seas
Unite their waves beneath the Pyraenees.
The costly quarrels of the wrangling bar,
More fatal than the bloody shocks of war,
Quell'd by thy edicts, from the courts are flown;
Thy hand, great king, lifts justice to her throne.
How many heirs whom fraud would have betray'd
Are sav'd, how many lawyers useles made;
What widows in thy gracious reign are griev'd,
What poor oppress'd, what orphan unreliev'd?
Thy ear to every just complaint is free,
And the whole universe is blest in thee.
What art or science, or distinguish'd worth,
Or in the torrid east or frigid north,
Hast thou not sought, rewarded and enrich'd,
And to the poles thy boundless bounty stretch'd?
The muses we in full abundance see
From chilling want, great king, reliev'd by thee.*

The king's emotion at such delicate praises, shewed itself in his eyes and whole countenance, and starting in a kind of ecstasy from his chair, "That's fine, said he, that's admirable. I would praise you more, if you had not praised me so much; but I must do something more than praise: I settle a pension of two thousand livres upon you; I shall direct Colbert to pay it beforehand; and I grant you the sole privilege of printing your works." It must not be omitted, that in the grant

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is this unparalleled encomium, " We the
" more readily permit the sieur Des-
" preaux to publish his works, that the
" public may partake of the exquisite
" pleasure which they have given us."

Before the king had declared himself
so graciously, the poet's noble introducer
was so transported with the beauty of the
lines, that in the royal presence he seized
the author by the throat, with this jest-
ing reproach, *Ab! thou sly rogue, I had
not a word of all these fine things.*

'Twas a pretty familiarity in his ma-
jesty to the poet at reading the *Lutrin*
to him; when Boileau came to this line,

In haste the domino is buddled on,

the king stopt him, saying, here's a
mistake, most worthy poet, you make
summer the time of action, and after-
wards put on the canon a domino, which
is a winter habit; you must allow me
to be something of a judge, being
myself a canon; which was literally
true, the kings of France being canons
of several cathedrals.

Here seems a luxuriant prospect sud-
denly opening upon him, yet he himself

has several times declared, that the first reflection on his change of fortune, was uneasy and dejecting ; concluding, that the beginning of his opulency was the period of his liberty.

Another talent he was possessed of, which though much inferior to his poetry, was at first not unserviceable to him, he being such an ingenious pantomime, that he could imitate the gestures, carriage and elocution of any one ; and what is as certain as it is surprising, having undertook to imitate a man who had just performed a very difficult dance, he went through the same dance with the like exactness and motion, though he had never learn'd that art. One day he diverted the king with mimicking the whole company of comedians ; the king having also bid him mimic Moliere, who was present, asked Moliere if he knew himself ? To which he answered, *We cannot judge of our own likeness, but mine is perfect if he has hit me as exactly as he has hit the rest.* He did not wait the admonitions of age to be ashamed of blending the buffoon with the poet ; and if ever he accepted of invitations to entertainments, 'twas only to repeat his poems.

The

The great Condé honoured him with his favour, as he did all men of letters, and took great delight in talking with them about their works. When, in these literary conversations, the prince maintained a good cause, he spoke with a most graceful sweetness; but when he happened to be in the wrong, there was no contradicting him: The sparkle of his eyes, once in a dispute of this nature, struck Boileau so, that he submitted and whispered to his neighbour, For the future I'll always be sure to side with the prince when he is in the wrong.

Being one Easter at the seat of an illustrious friend, he presented himself for confession to the parish priest, who not knowing him, asked him his calling; *I make verses*, answered Boileau. *That's bad*, said the priest, *and what verses?* *Satyrs*, added the penitent. *Worse and worse*, reply'd the confessor, *but against whom?* *Against those*, said Boileau, *who make bad verses, against the vices of the times, against licentious compositions, against romances, against operas, against ———* Oh! ho, interrupted the priest, *all's well then, and I have nothing more to say to you.*

Several advised him against Satyrs, as they would infallibly create him many enemies: To this his answer was, *I'll be an honest man, and then a rush for enemies.* The good natured Mademoiselle de Lamignon telling him, Boileau, you must leave off writing satyrs, 'tis offending against charity: Why, Madam, says the poet, won't you allow me to satyrise the Great Turk, that chief of Infidels, that implacable enemy of our religion. The Great Turk, answered the lady, he is a sovereign, and consequently to be respected. Well, but I hope your ladyship will allow of a satyr against the Devil. *No, no, return'd the other, pausing a while, you must never speak ill of any one.* Our poet's satyrs gave such offence to the duke de Montausier, that hearing the king had settled a pension upon him, he said, For my part I suppose robbers will soon come in for pensions; adding, that Boileau and all the satyrists ought to be ducked for their malignant rhymes; and even in the king's presence would censure his majesty's approbation; however, meeting Boileau once at Versailles, he came up to him and paid him a compliment on the death

Nicholas Boileau Despreaux. 205

of his brother, whom, said the duke, I very much loved. *I know that he placed a proper value on a friendship which did him so much honour*, answered the poet, *but still more on your Grace's exalted virtue, and used frequently to express his concern that the worthiest person in the whole court was not my friend.* The delicacy of this praise, and the air of sincerity with which it was delivered, melted the duke into a reconciliation; he took Boileau home to dinner with him, and was his friend ever after. This austere nobleman had formerly felt the passions of humanity, as appears from a most polite and ingenious piece of gallantry of his, called, *Julia's Garland*, from its being presented on a new year's day to a young lady of that name, whom the duke courted. He had all the finest flowers exquisitely painted on separate pieces of vellum of an equal size, leaving under every flower space for a madrigal, containing a compliment from the flower to his charming Julia; these being all bound into two rich volumes, was the elegant present which that beautiful lady found upon her toilet, in the morning of a new-year's day. The violet

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violet is made to address Julia in the following lines.

*Lowly my stature, and of modest hue,
Shrouded beneath the leaves I shun the vie,
But to your temples rais'd in happy hour,
Changes the humblest to the proudest flower.*

Boileau usually writ the second line first, and this he said was one of the greatest secrets of Poetry, for giving force and spirit to verses. He was not very ready at composition, he owns it himself, and once an intimate friend coming into his chamber and finding him in a strange discomposure, asked him, What was his concern? Rhyme, a Rhyme; I have been racking my brains these three hours about it. Shall I fetch you a dictionary of Rhymes? No, no, reply'd Boileau, rather fetch me the dictionary of reason.

The famous duke de la Feuillade once shewing Boileau some verses, which he seeming to slight; let me tell you that you are over nice, said the lord, to turn up your nose at verses which to the king and the dauphiness seemed excellent. I do not in the least question his majesty's skill in taking towns and gain-

ing battles, and I am as ready to own the wit and judgment of the dauphiness, but by your leave, my lord, I understand verses as well as either of them. Away hies the marshal to the king, and eagerly says to him, Was there ever such a presumptuous coxcomb as that Boileau, he had the face just now to tell me that he understands poetry a little better than your majesty. Oh! as to that, marshal, answered the king, I am sorry to tell you that Boileau is quite in the right.

M. Arnaud, to whom the epistle on *false bashfulness* is inscribed, calling one morning upon Boileau, who usually lay late, he read it to him for the first time, in bed, when he came to this line,

Le moment où je parle est déjà loin de moi,

that grave person struck with its expressive rapidity, started up, and walked very hastily to and fro the room, repeating several times,

Le moment où je parle est déjà loin de moi,

this line is a happy translation of that in Persius,

Fugit hora ; hoc quod loquor inde est.

Mr.

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Mr. Arnould vindicated Boileau in a printed letter, and as this was of weight with all whose esteem was worth having, the poet not only acknowledged in a letter the great honour done him by such a vindication, but in a warmer effusion of gratitude, recommends the perpetuating it to his verses.

*Say, though I've list'd in my friendly roll
So many writers of Ignatius school,
That learned Arnould so esteem'd and fear'd,
By every good impartial man rever'd,
Who his whole science and resistless sense
Against them bent, appear'd in my defence:
He justify'd my works, for me he drew
His pen, and set my innocence in view.
This on my future tomb, my verse proclaim,
And mine confirm, by his immortal fame:
There place yourselves in characters of gold,
Fly farther than young Ammon march'd of old:
Tho richest jasper seek, and on the stone
Grave my high fate, and make his goodness known.*

Besides this honourable testimony, the king's proclamation for apprehending M. Arnould being talked of, in a large company of persons of rank, Boileau made no scruple to put in his word, and say, *The king is too fortunate ever to find out Mr. Arnould.*

It

It is very remarkable, that where this M. Arnauld, so celebrated, and so defamed, when living, died, is not known for certain, though believed to be in a poor village in the country of Liege; the place of his burial is still a greater secret: However, at his earnest request, a messenger carried his heart to * *Port-Royal in the fields*. The ladies of that recess received it with the utmost joy and reverence, depositing it in the most honourable part of their chapel, with this fine epitaph by Santeuil.

* Port-Royal, six leagues from Paris, was a famous seminary of ladies, where the discipline was very exemplary; but the nuns incurring a suspicion of Jansenism, were prohibited from entertaining any boarders or novices: Near this abbey were three colleges, the professors of which, known in the republic of letters by the appellation of Messieurs de Port-Royal, were authors of several valuable pieces: They had also subordinate seminaries in several other parts of the kingdom; but by the intrigues of their inveterate enemies, the Jesuits, they were totally suppressed, and even the buildings demolished, by a special edict of Lewis XIV. about the year 1660.

*Ad sanctas rediit sedes ejectus et exul
 Hoste triumphato, tot tempestatibus actus
 Hoc portu in placido, hac sacrâ tellure quiescit
 Arnaldus, veri defensor et arbiter æqui
 Illius ossa memor sibi vindicet extera tellus
 Huc cœlestis amor rapidis cor transtulit alis
 Cor nunquam avulsum nec amatis sedibus absens.*

In English.

*Here rests in hallow'd earth secure from spite,
 Arnald, great arbiter of truth and right,
 Arriv'd in port and landed safe on shore,
 The sea subdu'd and the wild tempest o'er.
 Tho' in some foreign land his bones be laid,
 His heart, on rapid wings by love convey'd,
 Enjoys the dear retreat from which it never
 stray'd.*

Such was the rancour of the Jesuits against their adversary's memory, that they never would forgive this encomium, though the author sought a reconciliation in a manner unbecoming his reputation.

Here I must subjoin (what indeed should properly have been inserted in his life) a remarkable circumstance, equally redounding to the reputation of M. Arnald's father for disinterestedness, and of the University of Paris for gratitude.

itude. He declined the gratification from the university as their council against the Jesuits, upon which the university passed an act in the most authentic form, binding all its members to a perpetual acknowledgment of his great services and generosity: The honorary decree was in substance; *Quapropter, cum consultorum disertissimus & disertorum consultissimus D. Antonius Arnaldus in foro Parisiensi spectatus a multis annis patronus pro defensione juris academici . . . tantopere desudaret: & longa comtaq; oratione quæ doctorum manibus teritur probarit . . . cumq; eidem pro defensionis laboribus patrociniiq; jure oblatum sibi ab academia honorarium remiserit, gratuitamq; suam operam esse voluerit; ne apud nos ingrati animi culpa resideat, placuit rectori, quatuor facultatibus & singulis nationibus, ut perpetua tanti beneficii memoria publicis tabulis consignata & testata apud posteros extaret, huicq; sacramento se omnes academici obstringerent; se ea officia quæ a bonis clientibus fido patrono solent deferri, omnia in illum ejusq; liberos & posteros collaturos, nec eorum unquam honori, commodis, famæ defuturos.*

Boileau,

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Boileau, like Horace, complimented his gardiner Antony with an epistle; and the celebrated Bouhours asking the man if he did not think it the finest of all his master's pieces? No, no, answer'd honest Anthony, 'tis that on *the love of God*; but such was Anthony's zeal for the honour of his profession, that he found fault with the first line;

Laborieux Valet du plus commode maitre;

Valet! no, no, gardeners are no valets; ours is a useful, antient, creditable calling.

The sublime epistle *on divine love* was writ in opposition to a principle generally maintained by the Jesuits, that *bare attrition arising solely from the fear of hell, is sufficient, with the sacrament, exclusively of any love of God*. Sirmond, a French Jesuit, delivers himself thus: "St. Thomas says, we are obliged to love God as soon as he has given us the use of reason. But that is a little too soon. Scotus: Every Sunday. What foundation has he for that? Others: In times of strong temptations. Ay, if there was no other way to get clear of them.

them. Scotus again: That after some great mercy received from God, it is not amiss to thank him for it. Others: At the point of death. That is a little too late. After all, attrition with confession will do well enough." This is of a piece with the *relax morality* of that society, as a specimen of which, father Cellot relates this story with approbation, and attributes it to the guidance of the party's guardian angel. "We know, says he, a certain man, who going to restore a considerable sum of money by order of his confessor, stopped by the way at a bookseller's, and asking him if he had any thing new, the bookseller shewed him the new treatise of *moral theology*: The man carelessly turning over the leaves, chanced to meet with his very case, and there learned that he was not obliged to restitution; and so, being eased of the burden of his scruples, and pleased with the burden of his cash, he went home as light as a feather.

In 1677 Boileau was appointed, together with Racine, to write the king's history, and the following year made the campaign in Flanders. Once upon a march, happening to be alone with

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with the son of the great Conde, the young prince said to him, "Glory-hunting seems to be the merest whim in the world, 'tis at least but a chimera, and never properly attained till after death, and where is its worth then? Besides, who is he that can hope to reach the fame of Alexander; the greatest names have been, and ever will be, eclipsed by it? Do you know any one equal to it?" "Yes, my prince, replied Boileau, and Socrates is the man: The philosopher, though he has writ nothing, is upon a level with the conqueror in point of reputation."

Upon which the prince calling to a husbandman, asked him, *Did you ever bear of Alexander? That I have, Sir, he was some fighting king. Well, and Socrates, who was he?* Here the husbandman shook his head; and the prince thought he had silenced Boileau, who said he would appeal to some other villager.

In the year 1684 he was elected into the academy, to which however, though of such a superior reputation, his satyrising several of the members would have been an insuperable obstruction, without the intervention of his Majesty, *there be-*

ing

ing a statute against the admission of any one who has decried the academy in the persons of its members. Here, on a remarkable occasion, he shewed the constancy of his friendship: Upon the death of Furetiere, it was to be put to the vote, whether the academy should perform the usual obsequies for him: Boileau went thither on purpose, and seeing it was going in the negative, he alone had the resolution to speak to the point. "Gentlemen, three things are to be considered here, *God*, the *public*, and the *academy*. As for *God*, what can be more acceptable to him, than a sacrifice of your resentments, and your merciful prayers for a dead man, who stands in more need of them than another, were it only for his declared animosity against you. In the eyes of the *public*, it will be very glorious to forbear pursuing such an enmity beyond the grave; and the *academy* will give a shining pattern of lenity in returning injuries with supplications, and joining in the methods of the church for God's reconciliation to a sinner; and this is the more incumbent on you, as besides the religious obligation to pray for your enemies, it is one
of

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of your private institutes to pray for the brotherhood." Possibly, there never was a more galling sarcasm than the reverse of the medal struck upon Furetiere's expulsion; it represented a man easing himself, with this motto, *Ejecto, corpori sanitas.*

Boileau had long absented himself from court, but going thither upon the death of his colleague Racine, to receive directions concerning the history, the king, after some chearful talk, said, pointing to his watch which he happened to have in his hand, Remember that I shall always have an hour a week for you when it suits you to come to Versailles. Yet, after this singular honour, he never went again; and when his friends advised him to shew himself at least now and then, his answer was, What should I do there? I am grown quite unfit for praise.

As there are such distinguished products of Boileau's intellectual, we have many amiable instances of his moral qualities, as Madam de Sevigny used to say of him, that he was cruel only in his Satyrs. When that correct writer, Patru, was reduced to sell his library, Boileau went to him, and not only gave him

him a greater sum than what he had rated it, but would have only an instrument to secure the library to him after his death; the sight of an indigent man of letters made his bowels yearn: Even Liniere frequently tasted of his bounty, that abandoned Liniere, the best action of whose life, he said, was drinking off a holy water-pot, into which a mistress of his had dipt the tip of her finger.

An ecclesiastic once inveighing with a seeming indignation against pluralities, told Boileau, Is it possible such and such, with their vast learning, can be so fatally blinded? If the doctrine of the apostles, if the decrees of councils, be of any weight with them, they must know the danger of having many benefices: I am in priests orders, and, without vanity, of one of the best families in the county, and a gentleman is in some measure obliged to live up to his birth; yet I protest to you, Sir, were I once settled in an abbey, though but of a thousand crowns a year, it would be the *ne plus ultra* of my honest ambition; I should rather decline than court any further preferments. Soon after this moderate gentleman's brother helped him to an abbey of no less than

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seven thousand livres a year; the next winter he wriggled himself into another of eight thousand; and within a year, upon a vacancy of a priory of six thousand, he collected his whole interest and obtained it. Boileau, stunned at this speedy accumulation of benefices, paying the pluralist a visit, said to him, What is become of that candor and moderation, which saw so much impiety and danger in multiplying benefices? Ah! my friend Boileau, answered he, if you knew how these things sweeten life! I make no doubt on't, replied Boileau, they sweeten life; but death, abbé, death, there's the sting. Such a reproof came with the better grace from Boileau, as having possessed a benefice near nine years, without wearing the ecclesiastical habit, when he found in himself a settled aversion to that state, he resigned his living, and computing the neat profits which it had brought to him, distributed the money among the poor of that parish.

Boileau never partook of any meals abroad, not even among his best friends, unless he was invited: He used to say, that *the pride of the heart becomes men of*
sense,

sense, but the pride of carriage belongs only to fools.

He was of a social humour, and particularly punctual in appointments. I never make any one stay for me, said he, for I have observed that the faults of a man usually present themselves to the reflection of a person who waits for him.

There happened one day such a hot dispute betwixt Boileau and a brother of his a churchman, that the latter forgot himself so far as to give his brother the lye, in a very abrupt manner: The friends on both sides interposed for a reconciliation, and desired him to forgive his brother. Ay, with all my heart, answered he, for I kept my temper; but had I been guilty of such brutality, I should never have forgiven him whilst I lived.

The duke of Orleans invited him to dinner, and though it was a day of abstinence, the table was covered with exquisite dishes of meat. The duke perceiving that he eat nothing but his Bread; come, you must e'en do as others, my profane cooks have forgot the day. Boileau answered, At a stamp of your royal

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highness's foot, the fish will rise out of the floor. Alluding to the compliment paid to Pompey, that a single stamp of his would raise legions out of the ground.

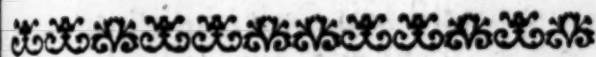
Towards the close of his life, a friend finding him taken up in revising his works; he said, you find me idly busy, instead of rhymes and Parnassian trumpery, it would better become me to fix my thoughts on the awful account which I must shortly give to God.

In his last illness being asked how he felt himself, he answered,

Venit summa dies & ineluctabile fatum.

A friend coming in, a minute or two before his departure, he squeezed him by the hand, and said, Good morrow and a long Farewell. He went through the preparatory offices with a devout composure, and having no necessitous relations, crowned all his former beneficence by leaving the greatest part of his fortune to the poor.

NICHOLAS



NICHOLAS MALEBRANCHE, born
1638, died 1715.

✱✱✱✱ I was with great difficulty he
✱✱✱✱ was reared, on account of his
✱✱✱✱ tender constitution and con-
✱✱✱✱ tinual ailings; there was be-
sides something very singular in his
shape, his back-bone being prominent,
and his stomach extremely depressed, so
that nature no less than grace inclined
him to the church; accordingly in 1660
he was initiated in the congregation of
the oratory at Paris.

He first applied himself to church-
history, and a glossary on the bible;
but without any proficiency, finding
them abstruse and unsatisfactory. In his
26th year a bookseller put into his hand
Descartes's *Treatise on Man*; it struck
him with a light, he discerned in it
a science of which he had till then no
idea. What is strange; whilst he was go-
ing through the book, he was seized with
such palpitations, that put a stop to his

reading. Hereupon he forsook all other studies, and when the critics and historians censured him for it, he asked them whether Adam was not endued with a perfect knowledge? and they in deference to the common opinion of divines, not contradicting it, he added, then history and criticism are no parts of perfect knowledge, and I am for knowing only what Adam knew.

In a few years he learned at least as much as Descartes himself knew; for in philosophy, the progress depends on thinking, and one man in the same time thinks a great deal more than another; whereas a man can read no more than another could have done within the same time; thus philosophers and poets are made by genius, and scholars by time; F. Malebranche used such expedition to become a philosopher, that in 1674 he published his *Inquiry after Truth*.

The book made a great noise, and, among other fautors, the celebrated M. Arnaud declared for it. Intellectual, sublime, and rigid as this system was, many were thoroughly penetrated by it, which was the author's chief satisfaction; the instruction of others and not his own repu-

reputation being the scope of his labours ; others only applauded him without professing his doctrine, the conditions of which are indeed not easily digestible ; the senses and imagination are to be totally thrown aside ; there must be a continued effort of gradual meditation to reach a certain region of ideas ; but the ascent is in effect so difficult, that even among the philosophers, in whose eyes all others are the vulgar, there is a vulgar to whom it is inaccessible.

At the desire of the duke de Chevreuse, in 1667, he published his *Christian Conversations*, shewing the conformity of his system with religion : his *Theodora* excels Plato's *Socrates* in delivering Mankind of the truths which lay hid in them, and causing them to perceive from themselves the being of a god, and the necessity of a mediator and of grace. In a subsequent edition he added meditations, in which he improves so many philosophical *speculations* into *elevations* to God ; this was to gratify some devout persons who objected that his abstracted philosophy did not stir the affections.

F. Malebranche's treatise on *Nature and Grace*, which appeared in 1680, was

written in some measure to answer a kind of challenge made to him in company by M. Arnaud, and occasioned a paper war.

Before the rupture F. Malebranche composed his *Christian and Metaphysical Meditations*. 'Tis a dialogue betwixt the *Logos* and himself. Persuaded that the *Logos* was the universal reason, that he is the only light from whom we are enlightened, the only instructor in all truth, he introduces the *Logos* in answer to his invocation, speaking to him as to his disciple, and laying open to him the deepest truths of metaphysics and religion: this dialogue has certainly an elevation worthy, as far as a human pen can reach, of the divine interlocutor; the author's skill, or rather the natural humour which such a composition brought upon him, has given it that august gravity, which awes the senses and imagination, and commands attention and respect.

In 1683 M. Arnaud commenced hostilities; not against the *treatise of Nature and Grace*, as had been agreed, but against an opinion *that all things are seen in God*; which had been illustrated at large

large in the *Inquiry after Truth*. Several writings passed betwixt them, as letters to a common friend, and at the beginning, the two antagonists stiled each other *our friend*, but this gentle appellation was too soon superseded by keener language, till M. Arnaud proceeded, but, certainly very wrongfully, to accuse his adversary of giving a material extent to deity, and insinuating irreligious notions. Hereupon F. Malebranche implores God to stop his pen and suppress the motions of his heart; he pathetically pours forth his sorrow and agony at being an actor in a public controversy, no less dangerous to the world than theatrical representations.

During the heat of the action, the world was favoured with the *Treatise on Morality*, in which F. Malebranche, in his original way, deduces all our duties from principles, that his readers are surprized, and not a few of them vexed, to find themselves tied up even by philosophy, which they imagined more indulgent, to the most self-denying obligations of christianity.

In 1615 M. Arnaud renewed his attacks, by the publication of *Reflections*

on the *Treatise of Nature and Grace*, as a sparring blow to F. Malebranche's new philosophy and divinity, which himself denied to be either *new* or *his*; for it was his real belief, that he owed the philosophy to Descartes, and the divinity to St. Austin: But if they laid the foundations of the structure, it was he who raised it to the height which would have surprised even the founders themselves. He answered M. Arnaud with his natural strength and mildness, and with the usual success; each accounted conqueror by his party.

Though sincere in what he maintained, and desirous of communicating light, he determined to break off all disputes, both from his own placid disposition, and a belief that, so far from giving the readers the precious clew of truth, after leading them to and fro among the endless sinuosities of *pro* and *con*, they left them quite bewildered.

F. Malebranche found that our tranquillity is not entirely in our own power; M. Regis, over whom he obtained a declared advantage in a dispute concerning the apparent dimensions of the moon, was for taking a severe revenge, and charged

charged him with maintaining, that *pleasure constituted happiness*; thus F. Malebranche's exemplary manner of living, his retirement, his self-denial could not save him from being exposed as an advocate of pleasures: this was followed by another very different disturbance, and from a quite opposite cause; Father Lami, the famous Benedictine, his intimate, if not his disciple, in his *Self-knowledge*, was willing to maintain his idea of a disinterested love to God from the authority of F. Malebranche; who, uneasy at being brought in as countenancing a sentiment for which he had never declared, and which was a delicate point bordering on Quietism, against which the divines united their fulminations, published his opinion in his treatise on the love of God, 1697; but without so much as naming F. Lami, or attacking any particular person; of the two last he used to complain, *Am I not hardly dealt with? M. Regis accuses me of epicurism and P. Lami of quietism.* M. Arnaud rested from his labours in 1694, but two posthumous letters of his came out, full of such heavy charges against the good Father, that he could not let

them spread without animadversion ; he tacked to his answer a smart little piece *against prejudice*, consisting of a series of geometrical demonstrations of this wonderful paradox, that M. Arnaud was not the real author of any of those books which have appeared in his name against F. Malebranche, upon this single *postulatum* that M. Arnaud spoke truth in professing before God, *that it was ever his sincere desire to give a right construction to the opinions which he opposed, and that he had been very far from making use of any artifices to place the authors or their books in a false light* ; this being granted, the day is his own ; several passages of F. Malebranche manifestly mutilated, detortions of his meaning, evidently voluntary, artifices too strongly marked to be without design, demonstrate that he who made the protestation cannot be the same with the author of the book.

Whilst F. Malebranche was struggling with these oppositions at home, his philosophy had reached China, and with such acceptance, that a missionary Jesuit wrote to the society in France, not to send any to China but those who, besides a skill in mathematicks, had digested

gested F. Malebranche's works, and he was desired to write expressly for the Chinese. Accordingly, in 1708 he composed his *Dialogue betwixt a christian philosopher and a Chinese philosopher on the nature of God*. The Chinese hold matter to be infinite, eternal, and increate; and *Ly*, a kind of modification of matter, to be the supreme wisdom and intelligence, though not distinct from nor independant of matter; the christian easily demolishes this strange *Ly*, converts their idea of him into that of the true God, or F. Malebranche's universal reason which enlightens all men, and in which all things are to be seen. Though, as this piece related only to the Chinese philosophers, no new quarrel was to be apprehended from it; yet a quarrel it did produce, and with the *Trevoux-Journalists*, they denied that the learned among the Chinese were chargeable with atheism, whereas the Father proved the charge from the missionaries writings.

His last book, which came out in 1715, was *Reflections on Physical Premotion*, which some were labouring to establish; he represents this physical premotion by a comparison, as conclusive, perhaps,

perhaps, and certainly more sensible than any metaphysical argumentations: A workman makes a statue, the head of which, moving by a joint, bows respectfully to him, upon his pulling a string; every time he pulls it, he is highly pleased with the forced homage of his statue; but one day not pulling the string, his image does not move his head, upon which the artist in a pet breaks it all to pieces. F. Malebranche proves that this system makes God deficient both, in goodness and justice; whereas he clears the Supreme Being from the false severity attributed to it by some divines, and vindicates the true severity in which religion makes him known, steering betwixt the two rocks of an overstrained divinity and a relax philosophy.

F. Malebranche, by his agreeable temper and the diet of his order, had so far got the better of his bad constitution, that he enjoyed a settled health; upon any indisposition, his chief remedy was to dilute his inside with copious draughts of water, being persuaded that when his hydraulics were in good order, all was well; but in the year 1715, and
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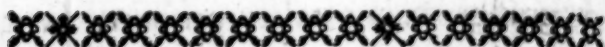
in his 77th, he was seized with a general languor, under which he lay four months in such a gradual decay, that he became a real skeleton. His illness suited his philosophy, almost annihilating the body which he had so much neglected, without impairing the powers of the mind which he had so indefatigably cultivated. This composure he turned to devout uses, and sometimes, as a recreation, to philosophise on the dissolution of the human machine. He continued to the last a serene observer of the slow approaches of his death, the instant of which was so gentle, that he was thought to be sleeping.

After being put upon a right scent, by reading Descartes, he studied to improve his mind, and not to surcharge his memory ; so that, tho' he read but little, he had learned a great deal. Matters of meer erudition were no part of his reading ; an insect was more to him than all the Greek and Roman histories ; that philosophy also, which is no more than learning the opinions of philosophers, was of no account with him ; the history of men's thoughts is to be known without thinking. After this, it
will

will not seem strange, that he could not read ten verses together without a visible disgust. Meditation was his element, with some uncommon precautions, as shutting his windows. His recreations were all childish ; but to this choice, in appearance so ridiculous, he was moved by a very philosophic reason, that they might make no impression upon his mind ; so, when they were over, all that remained of them was, that there had been an interval of amusement. His conversation turned upon the same subjects as his books, only, in condescension to the generality of the people, he endeavoured to moderate the piety of it, but never departed from the character of a philosopher ; it was as much his care to divest himself of a superiority which belonged to him, as others are forward to take upon them that to which they have no title ; he was for promoting truth, and knew it would not gain admittance among men, unless meekness, complaisance, and submission were its introducers. Few foreigners, of learning, were known to come to Paris without paying their respects to him ; some German princes came on purpose ; and
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an English officer professed that he did not grudge being taken prisoner, as it gave him an opportunity of seeing Lewis XIV. and F. Malebranche. James II. of England honoured him with a visit; Colonel Coddington, a most ingenious gentleman of that nation, during the two years he staid at Paris, seldom missed spending two or three hours with him in a morning. F. Malebranche's countrymen were far from overlooking his merit; many eminent persons resorted to him; they were equally his disciples and friends, and there was scarce being one without the other; the embracing of a system implying a love to the founder, especially such a founder; accordingly no philosopher, not even Pythagoras, had ever more confirmed followers. And it may be thought that the goodness of F. Malebranche's heart, and the amiableness of his manners were not a little assisting to the penetration of his mind, and the plausibility of his doctrine, in producing such a persuasion.

PETER



PETER DANIEL HUET born 1674,
died 1721.

IN him the love of study preceded, I will not say reason, its beginning being unknown, but the use of speech. *I was scarce weaned, says he, when the sight of a book kindled a desire in me, and I felt a kind of envy at any I saw reading;* his father and mother dying in his infancy, he was put to a petty school; yet, with little help, and amidst the worst of examples, he compleated himself in humanity before he had reached his fourteenth year.

In philosophy he had an excellent professor, who, like Plato, was previously for giving him a taste of geometry; but the scholar exceeded his teacher's intention, being so smitten with the love of this science that he made it his chief study, bestowing little attention upon the other exercises dictated by the professor, who was too discrete to take offence at it. From geometry he successively

sively proceeded through the other parts of mathematics, and though they were not, neither in the colleges nor even in the world, held in the esteem which they have now so justly acquired, he maintained public theses, in which he took care to interweave exhortations to a study which so richly rewarded the attachment of its admirers.

Upon his leaving the college, it was designed that he should qualify himself to take his degrees in the law; but two pieces which appeared about that time gave a different turn to his genius. These two pieces were *Descartes principles*, and *Bochart's sacred geography*. Here is a document, that all prejudices are to be guarded against, or at least not to be fomented to obstinacy, as the same man, and he a very sagacious reasoner, may think very differently at different times, M. Huet, from a zealous stickler becoming a sharp censurer of Descartes. As to Bochart's geography, it made a double impression on him, by the immense erudition of the work, and the presence of the author, he being the protestant minister at Caen, M. Huet's native place.

This

This book abounding with Hebrew and Greek, he could not be easy till he had added these languages to his other learning ; he waited upon the author, and put himself under him as a scholar ; but a scholar who was soon to become a rival, and may it not be said, a teacher ? For some time after he writes to this *Father of conjectures*, as he calls Bochart, in the following manner, concerning etymological proofs. “ Many, as if
 “ the Hebrew were the sole root of all
 “ languages, and God did not form
 “ any more at the confusion of Babel,
 “ are for finding therein the source of
 “ all other languages, however barbarous ; and even the origin of the
 “ nations who speak them ; upon the
 “ name of any King of Scotland or Norway, their conjectures are on the
 “ wing, first to Palestine ; if it is not
 “ to be met with there, away to Babylon ; if Babylon does not afford it,
 “ Arabia is at hand ; and rather than
 “ want an etymology at a pinch, their
 “ indefatigable researches will penetrate into Ethiopia, and never sit
 “ down ’till they have alighted upon a
 “ word which has some similarity of
 “ sound

“ found or letters, with that whose derivation is the point in view ; as if
“ the sounds of words were like that of
“ bells, which are imagined to say just
“ what we would have them :—By such
“ devices, the Hebrew or its dialect is
“ made to furnish the origin of the
“ names of King Arthur, and all the
“ knights of the round-table of Char-
“ lemain, and the twelve worthies of
“ France ; and, if required, of all the
“ Yncas of Peru. Was it not wonder-
“ ful sagacity in a German whom I
“ know, who would prove that Priam
“ and Abraham, Æneas and Jonas were
“ the same persons ? and promised an
“ elaborate work, incontrovertibly de-
“ monstrating all the languages from
“ Spain to China to be only different
“ branches of the same root ; even you
“ yourself, learned Sir, rather than be
“ without an explanation of the name
“ of a king on an inscription found in
“ Burgundy, hunted for it in the Ara-
“ bic, which luckily afforded a similar
“ word.”

M. Huet, in the mean while, mingled
the accomplishments of a gentleman with
the literature of a scholar. He visited
the

the polite, was very neat in his dress and studious of pleasing ; if he did not excell in dancing, he had few equals among his acquaintance in running, leaping, swimming, riding and fencing.

Being now, by the Norman custom, at twenty years and a day emancipated from improper guardians, he immediately gratified his strong desire of seeing Paris ; but it was, he says himself, not so much out of curiosity, as to select books and to procure the acquaintance of the *Princes of Literature*, with whom his merit soon ingratiated him ; even the austere F. Petau would clear up his brow in favour of this young stranger, as not only worthy to hear him, but who would sometimes take the freedom to differ from his opinion and enter into a formal dispute with him.

Two years after he accompanied Bochart, whom Q. Christina had invited into Sweden. Bochart arrived at a unfavourable juncture ; an excessive intenseness of study, spending whole nights among her papers, had affected her majesty's health, and Bourdelot her physician, like a crafty courtier, having studied her temper as thoroughly as her

con-

constitution, forbid her the society of learned men, thereby to secure his own ascendance over her : M. Huet's youth, giving no umbrage, gained him frequent access to the queen, who was for fixing him near her ; but warned by the many instances of her fickleness, he prudently returned to France, after a stay of only three months ; and a manuscript of Origen, which he copied at Stockholm, was the most valuable acquisition of this journey.

Upon his return M. Huet resumed his studies with more ardour than ever, recreating himself, or rather varying his application, at two academies ; one of which, for polite literature, had been formed in his absence ; of the other, for natural philosophy, he himself was the founder. Before he entered upon a translation of his Origen, he examined the different methods of the most celebrated translators, and from their observations formed his book *De Interpretatione*, the first he published ; and a suitable preface it was of all the other products of that universal genius : a piece where an immense reading, a judicious criticism are exhibited in a Latinism becoming

coming the Augustan age. At last, sixteen years after his return from Sweden, his *Origen* came out. These sixteen years, being entirely his own without any avocation, were mostly passed in his study, with an interval of a month or two every year, which he distributed among his Paris acquaintance.

Some flattering appearances had offered themselves, which, however, did not dazzle him; Queen Christina, after her abdication having removed to Rome in 1659, sent him an invitation; but the fate of Bochart, so impatiently expected and so suddenly forgotten, prevailed above the temptation of seeing Italy.

The abdication of that queen was in 1651, and in the twenty-fifth year of her age; it is observable, that when at the ceremony she pulled off her mantle, they who were near her, having laid hold of it, many others came up and cut it in a thousand pieces, to keep as memento's of a beloved princess whom they were never to see again. If an unlimited attachment to learning was the primary motive of this abdication, it was soon followed by a profession of catholicism, which

which was incompatible with the crown of Sweden. Whilst all Parnassus rung with eulogiums on this Queen, Guy Patin makes himself merry with her in a letter to his friend Spon; "the queen of Sweden is now neither at Turin nor Casal: She is drove to her last shifts, she intended for Rome, but as a terrible plague rages there, her visit may reasonably be excus'd. Let her return to France, the receptacle of all rambles: *Orbem receptans hospitem, atque orbi suas opes vicissim non avara impertinens*, as Buchanan somewhere characterises it. - The pope allows her eighteen thousand crowns a year, *mutant cuncta vices*. Strange changes in the world! The late king her father formerly ravaged and plundered Germany, and now she preys upon the pope, who is usually a devourer himself. Her father did his work openly, sword in hand, but his sly daughter spins a finer thread, under the specious veil of a sham conversion, she acts the Pilgrim; and, I suppose, in time will wander over the whole world, as she has already over a great part of Europe; having first been put upon this gadding hu-

VOL. II. M "mour

"mour by the Spaniards and jesuits:
 "rare counsellors!"

The word *ravag'd*, us'd by this facetious gentleman, is too rough. Adolphus, indeed made considerable conquests in Germany, but with a lenity beyond expectation, even punishing those of his soldiers who offered any insult to the persons, any violence to the effects, or any affront to the worship of the people, he was become so redoubted, that in Bavaria it was a part of the public prayers, *Defende nos, O Deus, ab hoste haereditario Diabolo Suedo!* From our inveterate enemy, the devil of Sweden, good lord deliver us!

To return to Mr. Huet; another offer was made to him from Sweden, to be preceptor to the young king; this temptation he also withstood, and those who judge of actions by the issue, will allow, that in staying in France he chose the best part, being within ten years appointed sub-preceptor to the dauphin, without any other patron than his own merit and the duke de Montausier's discernment.

It was the year 1670 when he came to court, where he stay'd till 1680, the year

year of his royal pupil's marriage. The more distractions grew upon him in this new situation, the more covetous he became of his time, even to abate of the few hours which he allow'd for repose; the remainder of his leisure was taken up in the duties of his employ, or bestow'd upon his *Demonstratio Evangelica*, which was begun and brought to an end amidst the embarrassments of the court.

To this great man the schools are in part obliged for that compleat assortment of notes in the classics, commonly call'd *The Delphins*. Though the scheme was originally the duke de Montauzier's, 'twas Mr. Huet who drew the model and superintended the execution as far as the docility or ability of the commentators would permit.

Having been so long taken up with compositions and lectures immediately relative to religion, in his forty-sixth year he entered into orders; soon after, he was nominated to the abbey of Annay, where he spent his summers, after leaving the court. One of the works which he composed there with the title of *Quaestiones Alnetanae* will perpetuate that delightful recess.

In 1685 he was preferr'd to a bishopric, but on account of the variance betwixt the courts of Rome and Paris his consecration was delay'd till 1692; such a retardment gave M. Huet no concern, and the life which was grown habitual to him, and had the most alluring recommendations, little suited with the various occupations which a conscientious bishop must discharge. In 1699 we find him resigning his bishopric, after a tedious conflict with its incumbrances. The king gave him a very agreeable compensation in the abbey of Fontenoy, it being just without Caen; fond of his native place, here he intended his final settlement, and set about repairing and imbellishing the abbot's house and gardens: his country had been in every respect delightful to him, whilst friends were all he had there; but upon becoming a possessor of lands, a multitude of suits immediately started up against him, which he chose to avoid by a second resignation.

Paris was the scene of the last twenty years of his life, during which the subject of his chief application was annotations on the *Vulgate*. The bible was to him

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not only the repository of religion, but he accounted it also the book on which a scholar might exercise himself with the greatest variety of improvements. He had read through the Hebrew text twenty-four times, comparing it also with the Oriental texts: he acquaints us, that from 1681 to 1712 he daily appropriated two or three hours to that study, without the intermission of a single day.

A severe illness seized him in the latter year, and confined him to his bed near six months with great prejudice to his memory, his other faculties still preserving their vigour. However, upon the first recovery of his strength, he betook himself to write his life, under the title of *Huetiana*, which is not a connected piece, but loose incidents thrown together, as they recurr'd to his decaying memory.

Upon considering the uncommon age of M. Huet, which was within a few days of ninety-one years; that his propensity to study declared itself in his infancy; that his whole time was almost intirely his; that he always enjoy'd an athletic state of health; that at his rising, at his going to bed, and at his meals his domesticks read to him, that to use his

own words, *Neither the heat of youth, the distractions of business, the diversity of employments, the company of his acquaintance, nor the bustle of the world could suppress the insurmountable love of learning, which has always been his leading passion;* it may be presumed, that, perhaps, of all the literati which have ever appeared, none have exceeded M. Huet in study. He, to whose curiosity few books were unknown, used to say, that all which had ever been written since the creation might be contained in nine or ten folios, if the same thing had been said but once. He excepted history which extended to infinite particulars, but as to arts and sciences, he was sure, he spoke within bounds; at that rate, said he, a close reader might know all that others have thought; whereas, repetitions have increased books to such a number, (there being above three hundred thousand known volumes in Europe) that a man after spending a hundred years in reading, would find he had read but little comparatively.

The learned of former ages, says M. Huet, destitute of those helps which their successors enjoy, seem to me intitled

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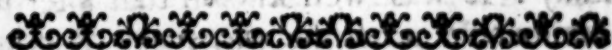
to much more esteem than those of the present times. There is little less difference between an ancient and modern scholar, than between Columbus crossing the vast ocean in the discovery of a new world, and the master of a little bark which makes its weekly trips betwixt Calais and Dover.

Whatever objections may lye against M. Huet's *Philosophical Treatise on the Weakness of human Understanding*, one cannot calmly hear such a man reproach'd with irreligion; his whole life was innocence itself, the life of a man crucified to the world, and absorb'd in study and speculation. Was not the promotion of religion the scope of his labours and conduct, and the holy scripture his chief study? It was well known that after he commenc'd priest he was every Sunday seen officiating at the altar; and when raised to the prelacy he had daily his stated hours for divine service.

The natural vigour of his constitution requiring a corrective, he ever observed a strict sparingness in diet; at his fortieth year he left off suppers, yet his dinners were very moderate and simple; no made dishes were seen at his table, except at

entertainments, and then, only such as became a liberal ecclesiastic; and to his water he scarce added an eighth part of wine; his evening draught was a kind of medicinal broth, called *Bouillon rouge du medecin de Lorme*; indeed in the very best state of health he had a settled paleness, at which strangers were often alarmed, as an indication of sickness.

A very remarkable particular is, that two or three days before his indisposition his whole genius kindled again, and his memory returned in its full strength; this happy change he made use of for the most judicious and fervent acts of piety, and departed in a serene confidence of felicity.



ANDREW DACIER, born 1651,
died 1722.

HE was so happy in a father, that it was a common wish among his relations, that he might be like him; to which his own dispositions and the father's attention concurr'd.

Whilst

Whilst he was learning the classics, he perceived that there was something still more important than a bare literal understanding them ; but which lay beyond the verge of common schools, and yet was not to be come at without a guide; and a most excellent one his father found out for him, the then celebrated *Tanaquill Faber*, who had the happy art of leading his pupils through flowery paths to the sources of the learned languages, and who display'd their beauties with a force and sweetness which season'd instruction with delight.

A more remarkable, and not less fortunate circumstance, contributed to his proficiency under this teacher. Miss le Fevre, his daughter, was herself a prodigy of learning, out-rivalling any of her father's scholars; a parity of age, with a conformity in religion (which was protestantism) and in talents and inclinations, inspir'd him with an emulation necessary to distinguish'd success.

M. le Fevre had an acquaintance far gone in judicial astronomy, who on the very day that Anne le Fevre was born, desir'd that he might be allow'd to cast her nativity, and in order thereto

be precisely inform'd of the instant. The astronomer after finishing his figure, told M. le Fevre that he was out in the time; for this nativity assures a fortune and fame quite foreign to a woman; Miss le Fevre often instanced this to prove the delusion of that art which saw so many fine things in the horoscope of a girl without any fortune; whereas, others have brought it as a confirmation of that science, applying those magnificent presages of fortune and splendor to the brilliant reputation she acquired.

It was the least of M. leFevre's thoughts to make his daughter a scholar, but an incident order'd it so. He had a son, whom he educated with the greatest care, and when he gave him his lesson, the daughter sat by at her needle; the young spark happening one day to stammer in his answer, Miss Anne prompted him what to say, though seemingly intent upon her work: the father heard her, and overjoy'd at the discovery, resolved to take her into his tuition; Miss severely repented of her officiousness, being now confined to regular lessons; but that reluctance was soon overcome by the father's commendations of her readiness and
viva-

vivacity, which were such, that from his scholar she became his confident, consulted in all his designs, and an assistant in all his compositions.

M. Dacier's triennial course of Belles-Lettres seem'd to come to an end with too much rapidity ; and, though young people generally think it a fine thing to be sent to the capital, it was with regret he went from Saumur to Paris, for the study of the law ; and this he only made a shew of, being much oftner among the literati than the lawyers, and contenting himself with law enough to correspond with his father, and prevail upon him not to hasten him to Castres, where it was his father's intention to settle him as a pleader.

In the mean time, M. le Fevre died, and Miss le Fevre being also discharg'd of an engagement owing to the scantiness of her father's circumstances. and of so short a duration that it had not chang'd her maiden name, the bookseller, who was to be the happy man, dying before the contract was carried into execution ; she remov'd to Paris, where she signaliz'd her arrival by a fine edition of Callima-
chus

chus with the Greek scholium, a Latin version and critical notes.

This initial essay happily revived the emulation of M. Dacier her school-fellow; he introduced himself soon after into the literary world by a translation of Horace, and his remarks on the Greek text of Longinus.

The rising reputation of these rivals reaching the duke de Montauzier, governor to the dauphin, they were appointed to comment upon some Latin authors for that prince's use; Mademoiselle Fevre's task was *Florus, Distys of Crete, Aurelius Victor, and Eutropius*; M. Dacier was charg'd with *Festus*, which for its largeness and the difficulty of the text, may be accounted equal to the other four.

The applause of the public, and the liberality of the court, were not the most valuable reward of these performances; their former esteem was now improv'd into an affectionate complacency, which without a formal courtship, was cemented by a marriage; on which an admirer of theirs complimented the bride with this Distich.

Desilo

*Docto nupta viro, docto pregnata parente,
Non minor Anna viro, non minor Anna patre.*

Whether the large offers and recompences bestow'd on converts of rank or parts made any impression on them, whether they accounted the differences not weighty enough to justify a separation, or whether they were led by a sincere regard to truth, they both at the same time declared that their attachment to literature had diverted their attention from religion, that they were about sequestering themselves from company and authors, and would retire for a time into their country there sedulously to employ themselves in canvassing the arguments of the catholics and reformed. The result of their retired disquisitions, which lasted several weeks, was a declaration for catholicism; the public profession of which, however, they deferr'd till their return to Paris, out of tenderness to their relations, whose concern at their defection, they judg'd would be imbitter'd by that ceremony.

Upon their return to Paris in 1686, the new converts being receiv'd with the utmost joy, they sat down to their usual exercises. Terence's Comedies now receiv'd

ceiv'd from Madem. Dacier, a light equal to that which she had given to those of Plautus and Aristophanes; and M. Dacier who had already publish'd five volumes of his translation and commentaries on Horace, compleated the work in five more.

Hitherto we have seen this extraordinary couple consulting their own particular taste in their compositions, without any joint work, the praise of which would be common to both. This was first recommended to them by the president Harley, their patron, who put into their hands the moral reflections of Marcus Antoninus for a French translation; to which they added curious remarks, and a life of the author; which in a great measure makes up the loss of that which the emperor himself is known to have written.

Soon after M. Dacier lost his father, the inheritance, though chiefly his concern, seem'd to require a conduct, of which he thought Madem. Dacier more capable than himself; she readily postponed her beloved occupations to the necessity of going to Castres upon her husband's affairs; and they who have seen the letters which she wrote from thence, speak of them

them as a surprising assemblage of exactness in the details of her proceedings, of the tenderest sentiments of a love increased by absence, and of erudition in her remarks on what occur'd to her in reading, to which she devoted her leisure hours: M. Dacier was not wanting to make the public some amends for his spouse's avocation, by a translation of Aristotle's art of poetry with notes; and 'twas in that kind of solitude that he formed the grand design of a new translation of Plutarch's Lives, intending to sound the inclinations of the public with a volume containing six lives; two he had finished before Madem. Dacier's return, when they privately agreed to divide the other four; and 'tis impossible to express their secret entertainment in the incertitude of the public, and the diversity of opinions to whom each particular life was to be attributed, the perfect similarity of their genius and talents having transfused itself into their very expressions.

M. Dacier's pen first taught Hippocrates to speak French, and it came with greater advantage from a neutral humanist than from a profest physician: his next favour was a translation of Plato, with

with notes ; the life of this philosopher, whose precepts on the purity and perfection of the soul are still more intitled to value than those which are limited to the welfare of a perishing body ; this was also follow'd by a version of other moral philosophers.

The charms of M. Dacier's translations gain'd him a seat in the French academy in 1695, to which honour was soon added his election into that of Inscriptions and *Belles Lettres* ; and possibly the public voice, which plac'd Madem. next to him in both, had been gratified, if her indifference about distinction had not obstructed more than the silence of the statutes, in a case scarce imaginable ; his capacity was signally acknowledged in the former, by their unanimous choice of him, upon a vacancy of the office of secretary.

Madem. Dacier had long since resign'd up to him the whole honour of a version of Plutarch, to give herself entirely to a more arduous undertaking, a translation of Homer, which should ingratiate that author with the warmest sticklers for the moderns.

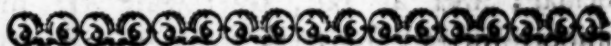
If her ardour for the antients has carried her beyond the gentleness of her sex,
and

and some outrageous expressions have escaped her in that controversy which made such a noise in the literary world, the following passage shews that her asperity did not proceed from pride: the northern literati, in their travels, never fail, wherever they come, to visit any who are eminent in literary reputation, and desire them to write their names, with a sentence, in a little book which they carry with them for that purpose; a German gentleman of great learning waited upon Madem. Dacier, and offering her his *album*, desired her name, and a sentence; she answered that she was not worthy to appear in such company, that for her to add her name would be the highest presumption; he would take no denial; and at last, overcome by his importunities, she took the pen and wrote her name, with a verse from Sophocles, in English, *Silence is woman's ornament.*

Valuable books were not the only fruits of this couple; they had a son and two daughters; a son so promising, that before he died, and he did not out-live his eleventh year, he was acquainted with some of the best Greek authors; the eldest daughter betook herself to a nunnery;

nery; of the youngest, who seem'd form'd for the joy of the family, they were deprived when she was but eighteen; the last trial of M. Dacier's tenderness was the death of his spouse, which happened in August 1720: the eulogiums on her talents and virtues could not dry his tears; he survived her only two years, though towards the close of them he seem'd to collect some spirits from the hopes of having found another Madam Dacier, with whom he should enter into a more auspicious marriage.

But this was all but a pleasing illusion, an ulcer bred in his throat, which slowly encreasing, gave him time to crown a studious life by a devout death, in the seventy second year of his age.



FRANCIS TIMOLEON, Abbé de
Choisy, died 1724.

*** HE abbé's unnatural educa-
* T * tion is thus described by him-
* * * self; such was my mother's
*** weakness, that she was perpe-
tually tricking me up; at the age of five

I was rubb'd every day with a water, which if early applied, eradicates the hairs: I was often dressed in girls cloaths, with ear-rings, diamonds, patches, and had exactly all the prim-airs and affectations, which are easily learnt, but hard to leave off; the duke of Orleans liked me extremely in that habit; he was brought to our house at least three times a week, where his royal highness was seated at a toilet and coiffed, had a pair of embroidered stays to form his shape, and taking off his coat, he was dressed in a robe and petticoats, then with some misses we went to girlish games: This was said to be a contrivance of the cardinal's, to kill any seeds of his father's turbulent courage which might be in him, and by the duke's effeminacy to secure the tranquillity of the king.

Such was the abbé's manner of life, with short intervals of literature; in which, however, he shew'd a most promising genius, equally adapted for levity and seriousness; but the former had for a long time the declared ascendant, and during his whole life was never totally exterminated. After his mother's death, the compliment of some ladies on the
pretty

pretty figure he made in a woman's dress, so pleas'd his vanity, that he frequently went to the play, church, assembly, and private visits in that disguise, especially to the duke of Orleans, who always received him with open arms, their inclinations being similar. *Monsieur* was no less inclinable to personate a female, but his dignity restrained him; thus princes are shackled by their grandeur; however, in the evenings he used to put on pinnars, ear-rings, patches, and view himself in the glasses, to the admiration of his sycophants. One day he gave a ball, and directed the abbé *de Choisy* to come in a loose gown, and masked, where he imitated the supposed fine lady so well, that to *Monsieur's* extreme diversion he was surrounded by crowds of gallants, some out of sport, and others in good earnest.

Nothing could equal the pleasure which such frolics gave the abbé, who had also formed many wanton schemes, but they were all dashed by the austere duke of Montauzier, who having brought the dauphin to the opera, left him in a box along with his daughter, the duchess *d'Uzes*: this lady seeing the abbé *de Choisy*, sent for him
and

and the dauphin, then in his twelfth year, paid him a thousand pretty compliments, and would have him stay to partake of a collation; the abbé was all in a rapture of exultation, when, on a sudden, the dauphin's grave tutor return'd; the dutchess telling her father the supposed lady's name, asked him if he was not a charming creature; this shew'd but little knowledge of such a man, to conceive that he would countenance this scandalous disguise: the duke, after viewing him some time, said, *I own Sir, or Madam, (which to call you I know not) that you do not want beauty; but are you not ashamed to wear the dress of a Woman, when it is your happiness not to be such; go, for shame, take yourself away, the dauphin thinks you are a Hoyden; no indeed, my Lord, reply'd the young prince, I think she is as beautiful as an angel.*

This reprimand could not put a total end to his extravagancies; and though it made Paris too hot for him, he had the confidence to purchase a seat in a remote part of the country, where he lived, with the title of the countess *de Barres*, and as such, was not only visited by all the neighbouring families of rank, but admired
for

his accomplishments, politeness and generosity; though the scene was alter'd, he had not departed from his schemes, which he carried to execution with two young ladies and an actress. After three or four years, his irregularities became suspected, and reached the ears of his relations, who came to him, and by reproaches and intreaties, so moved the Countess *de Barres*, that she disposed of all her female implements, and determined to act up to the character of abbé *de Choisy*.

Now his former course appeared so monstrous to him, that he was ashamed to see any one: he went to Italy, where among other pleasures, he gave himself up to play, but so unfortunately, that at Venice he was brought very near to the bottom of his purse; upon which he returned to France and spent six frugal months at his abbey of Siene, in order to be plentifully supplied for a new swing of pleasure, in which he was so notoriously profligate, that the king said, if he did not turn over a new leaf he would make him.

Soon after he was left without money or resource, having unaccountably thrown
up

up his abbey: but very fortunately the cardinal de Bouillon, who was going to Rome, upon the death of Clement X. 1676, took him as his conclaviste. The Spanish and Imperial parties, who were the strongest, favoured Odescalchi; but the king of France, who had got Clement X. elected in opposition to him, in 1670, still continued to thwart him. The French cardinals sent a representation to the king, which was drawn up by the abbé de Choisy, giving Odescalchi the best of characters, and alledging that he having an estate of 50,000 crowns per annum, it would be a great ease to the apostolic chamber; upon this the king directed them to vote for Odescalchi: our abbé, after the cardinal de Bouillon had signified this to Odescalchi, and left the room, threw himself at the feet of the future pope, saying, *ho baciato il primo, gli piesti di vostra santità*; he answer'd, *non e ancora*, but with a countenance flush'd with joy. The king's consent to this election did not induce Odescalchi to forget that it was by his means he had lost six years of exaltation; and it is a standing maxim for a state never to favour that cardinal whom it has

has once opposed ; this is an inexpressible crime with the popes, nor throughout Italy in any case is the greatest kindness an equivalent for an injury.

The untimely death of the young and beautiful queen in 1692 first raised in him some fluctuating ideas of conversion, which by a succeeding sickness struck deep into his heart : his condition during his illness is pathetically described in his 4th dialogue, “ I had hardly felt
 “ any influence from the train of reflection into which the queen’s death
 “ had thrown me, when I was seiz’d
 “ with such a violent fever, that within
 “ three days I lost my strength, complexion, and spirits ; death, which I
 “ had conceived to be at many years
 “ distance, now seemed to be stalking
 “ towards me in all its horrors ; the terrifying preparations of it were before
 “ my eyes, I was lying on a bed amidst
 “ priests, tapers, weeping relations, and desponding physicians ; not one object
 “ near me which did not sound in my
 “ ears, that my removal into eternity was
 “ near at hand : Oh ! who can set forth
 “ my thoughts in that situation ? if my
 “ body was attenuated, if little or no
 “ blood

" blood remained in my veins, my facul-
" ties were all composed, clear, and ac-
" tive. I saw, oh sight awful beyond all
" expression! I saw God upon a throne of
" light, encircled by angels; methought
" he examined me on all the principal
" actions of my life, and my abuses
" of his many favours: I was struck
" silent, I had nothing to plead in ar-
" rest of judgment; at the same time
" there was shewn to me the flaming
" abysses appointed for the wicked, and
" the devils their tormentors. No there is
" no conveying any idea of these things,
" it can be had only by being in a like
" condition; for do not imagine, that
" when the soul is upon the point of
" separation from the body: I say, do
" not imagine that our thoughts and
" perceptions continue the same as when
" in health, among the affairs or amuse-
" ments of the world; then the most
" obscure Mysteries clear up.

" *The soul's dark cottage, battered and decay'd,*
" *Lets in new light thro' chinks which time has*
" *made.*

" *Stronger by weakness, wiser men become,*
" *As they draw near to their eternal home.*

“ Leaving the old, both worlds at once they
“ view,

“ Who stand upon the threshold of the new.

“ Then we have a penetrating sense of
“ the justice of God, in the endless punish-
“ ment of sin ; then all our false philoso-
“ phy is confounded. Now, overcome with
“ terror I heard the physicians say, he has
“ not two hours to live. What agitations
“ did this rouse in me ? there was no time
“ for penance, to atone for my sins by
“ liberal alms was out of my power, all
“ the gates of heaven were shut against
“ me ; the sacraments, however, I had re-
“ ceived with the most serious preparation
“ I was capable of, for such a tremendous
“ passage ; but what avails a hurried pre-
“ paration ? and in the midst of such ima-
“ ges, what can be the thoughts of a heart
“ which had always been wallowing in the
“ mire of wantonness, pleasure, and am-
“ bition ; the violence of my emotions har-
“ rassed my poor body more than the dis-
“ temper, when through languor I fell
“ into a most refreshing sleep ; then, it was
“ that I imagined myself to be at the door
“ of a gallery all over light, but a mild light
“ which, without dazzling me, appear’d

“ to surpass all other lights in refulgency.
“ I found in myself an animated resolution
“ to convert myself if I recovered, and a
“ chearful hope that God would shew me
“ mercy. My mind being thus tranquil-
“ lized, forwarded my cure more than the
“ quinquina, and I soon saw myself re-
“ stored to the enjoyment of 'life, which
“ I had wish'd only for the sake of repen-
tance.”

In his philosophical Dialogues, written soon after, he thus expresses himself ;
“ Religion is in my mind, but has not yet reached my heart, I am clear in the existence of God, providence, and the immortality of the soul ; but still manacled and dragged along by passions, my freedom must be the work of God ; I believe another severe sickness would go a great way towards it.”

He was not long without such a visitation, and upon his recovery seemed to lay religion more to heart, but with a great alloy of conformity to the gay world. In 1685 the scene began to change, and by the cardinal de Bouillon's interest he went coadjutor to the chevalier de Chaumont, ambassador to Siam ; at so great a distance he did not

forget his patron, but made such a glorious representation of his person, qualities, and dignity, that the king of Siam was easily persuaded to write a letter, accompanied with presents to the cardinal de Bonillon; but this being known at the abbé's return to France, when the cardinal was in disgrace, the king ordered the abbé to distribute the presents to other persons, and threw the king of Siam's letter to the cardinal into the fire. It must not be omitted that he has printed a very entertaining account of this voyage.

Soon after, he writ the *Life of King David*, which was not only graciously accepted by the king, but added so much to his literary reputation, that he was elected into the French academy in 1687, and his speech on this occasion was of such a delicate turn, that F. Bouhours says, *The cardinal de Richlieu, who has been praised more than any man living, perhaps was never better praised than in this speech, which, had he been living, I am sure would not have been lost.*

This honour seemed to have worked as happily upon him as his two dangerous distempers, for now he is seen to allot a larger

larger share of his time to study than to pleasure: having reconciled himself to the king, by comparing him with David, to advance himself in the royal favour, he writ the life of Solomon, betwixt whom and Lewis XIV. he delicately draws a flattering parallel; but the most curious part of this composition is the conversations betwixt the Jewish monarch and the queen of Sheba. The historian relates, that one day the queen intending to put Solomon to a stand, shewed him at some distance two roses, one artificial and one natural; the king ordered a bee to be brought, which soon settled on the real one: another time the queen caused some boys and girls to be dressed exactly alike, to try if he could distinguish the sexes; *Let some basons full of cold water be brought,* said the king, *and let all these children fall to washing their faces;* their bold hasty way of washing shewed the boys, and the girls were known by their natural softness, which shrunk at wetting their faces. To these particulars he adds, that according to a standing tradition in Ethiopia, the queen of Sheba had a son by Solomon, called Menihelse,

and by the Arabians surnamed *The Son of the wise man*.

This was followed in 1689 by several other pieces of French history, all greatly esteemed; but when his history of St. Lewis was published, the booksellers were obliged to have a guard for a day or two to restrain the impetuosity of the crowds of buyers: there is a pretty curious particular relating to the first impression of his translation of the imitation of Jesus (his life at that time had little of that holy pattern) which being dedicated to Madam de Maintenon, had in the front the picture of that lady kneeling before a crucifix, with these verses of the 44th psalm under it, *Hearken O daughter and consider; incline thine ear, forget thy father's house; so shall the king have pleasure in thy beauty*: but some arch commentators caused them to be left out in the second edition.

The occasion of his *moral and pious stories*, which abound in that delicacy and sprightliness which enliven all the abbé's works, was as follows. Towards the end of the last century, many people of rank and piety were of opinion, that to bring the vitiated taste of the generality,

ality, from the trifling tales of the faries, and seducing novels, into a better channel, some masterly pen should be set to work to write little stories, not less entertaining than the former, but of a different tendency. The ladies were so besotted with that ribbaldry, that nothing else would go down with them, and the *blue bird* triumphed over the most solid compositions: this plan was no sooner concluded upon, but the whole assembly, where the abbé happened to be, cast their eyes upon him; stimulated by this compliment to his genius, he set about it that very evening, and in a short time published the first volume, which he afterwards encreased to three; a work, equally entertaining to persons of religion and politeness.

The *History of the Church* being commended as a *very entertaining piece*, the abbé took offence at that epithet, which was perfectly just, such narrations as the following, occurring frequently in it: "Henry II. was reproached with his fondness for the dutchess de Valentinois, then in her 70th year, which was no more than the result of a former, and perhaps innocent acquaintance; the dutchess was

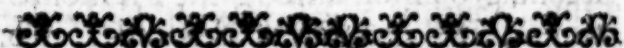
a sensible woman, not at all lifted up with her interest, and to avoid any appearance of governing the king, only intimated her sentiments; however, in honour of her virtues, whether real or false, he had a medal struck; on one side was her effigies, with this inscription, *Diana Ducissa Valentinorum clarissima*; and on the reverse, Diana trampling upon the god of love, with this inscription, alluding also to the king, *Omnium victorem vici.*"

"The king (Lewis XIV.) entered Flanders at the head of a powerful army, of which marshal Turenne was general; after taking within a fortnight, Tournay, Aeth, Armentieres, Courtray, and Douay, he laid siege to Lille, a very strong city, and garrisoned by 6000 men; it appeared to the majority of the generals an impracticable enterprize, but a young hero has no notion of impossibilities: the trenches were opened in the king's presence, who was mounted on a white horse; a page being shot near him, the count de Charost snatched off his hat, which was covered with white feathers, and clapt his own upon the king's head, and Turenne protested that he would

would quit the army if he went on to expose himself so rashly. The count de Brouay, governor of the place, being informed there was no ice in the camp, sent some every day, and the king once saying to the gentleman who came along with it, *Here's but very little ice*; Sir, answered the Spaniard, *the siege is like to last, and that makes us so sparing*. Upon which, going away, the same count de Charost called after him, *Tell the count de Brouay to shew himself a man, and not give up the place like that scoundrel the governor of Douay. Are you mad?* said the king. *How, Sir,* answered Charost, *the count de Brouay is my cousin*. The place being carried after a gallant resistance, the king returned to St. Germain, highly pleased with his campaign.

The Abbé's character has been exactly hit by a lady; who says, he liv'd four different sorts of lives, man, woman, ever in extremes; immersed in study or trifles; esteemable for a courage which could carry him to the farthest end of the world; despicable for all the coquetry of a giddy girl; and in these different scenes, still governed by plea-

sure: however, amidst all his levities, he was certainly of an excellent temper. *As for enemies, says he, thank God, I never had nor have any; and did I know any person who bore me the least ill will, I would immediately go to him, and by my submissions, intreaties, and complaisance, he should become my friend in spite of his very self.* Beloved as he was by very considerable courtiers, he could not have failed, with any tolerable regularity of conduct, to have attained a splendid fortune; but he comforts himself in this manner, *God would not have it so; I should have lost myself in elevated stations, and, besides, my account at death would be the larger; now I am accountable only for myself.*



RENE' AUBER de VERTOT, died
1735.

STHE sportive sallies of his childhood were soon superseded by a serious application to literature, which was seconded by such a memory and genius, that in his 17th year he

he maintained his last philosophical theses. Soon after, at his repeated instances, his parents consented to his tonsure. Such was his ardour to be a regular, that at his leaving the seminary of his novitiate, he disappeared, and it was not till after six months search, that he was discovered to be in a convent of Capuchins; nor could the intreaties of his father divert brother Zachary, for that was now his name, from making his profession; and he gave hopes of proving one of the most shining ornaments of that rule, had not an abscess in one of his legs necessitated him, after suffering extremely by its austerities, to change it for one of milder institutes.

At the age of twenty-two he made his second profession among the Premonstratenses; the general of this order, from his advantageous character, sent for him to teach philosophy; and when he came to know Auber Vertot personally, he conceived such a value for him, that he appointed him his secretary: the jealousy which this distinction raised against him, flamed with the more vehemence, as the laws of monastic discipline exclude a person who has quitted one order after pro-

fession from any benefices or dignities in that which he shall afterwards embrace. His patron espoused his cause so effectually, that he procured a Rescript from Rome, reinstating him in all his rights, and by way of triumph over malignity, conferred on him a priory.

This second favour roused his enemies to fresh persecutions; it was resolved in a provincial chapter, to lay a remonstrance before the council of state against all the briefs and bulls obtained from Rome in father Vertor's name, and every cause was going against him; when his majesty, upon being acquainted with the merits of the person thus prosecuted, was pleased, by his patent, to confirm the validity of the grants.

The security of his condition by the royal act could not restore his tranquillity; the distraction of solicitation, and anxiety of the issue, had brought on him most violent fits of the head-ach, and which he knew would never leave him, amidst the envy, malice, and wrangling, so prevailing among recluses, that *bourru comme un moine*; i. e. ill-natured as a monk, is become a phrase.

Thus

Thus preferring tranquility to other advantages, he reduced himself to a small parsonage, dividing his time between a zealous care for his flock and the study of the Belles Lettres and History, to which he was advised by the celebrated M. Fontenelle, as best adapted to his genius.

Here, in 1689, he composed his first piece, *The Revolutions of Portugal*, which has gone through several editions, in many languages; the reputation of this little piece accelerated the gratification of his longing desire to be settled in his native province of Normandy; for soon after he obtained leave to exchange for a benefice in that dutchy, and from that was promoted to one of a large revenue, and within sight of Rouen, the city where he was born.

Enabled now to enlarge his library, most of his income, like his time, was bestowed betwixt charity and learning. In 1696 he published *The Revolutions of Sweden*, for which there was such a demand, that four or five editions were printed off successively, without any alteration of date: translations of it appeared in most European languages; and the

the work was so esteemed at Stockholm, that it is said, the envoy, who was upon his departure for France, was directed to form acquaintance with the author, and offer him a present of two thousand crowns, to undertake a general history of Sweden; but this minister concluding to find the abbé de Vertot at Paris, in the best companies, and universally known to all persons of quality, surprized at not finding him any where; and being upon enquiry, informed that he was only a Norman vicar, made such a report of his commission, that the affair was dropped.

From the abovementioned history it appears that the clergy of Sweden were possessed of greater riches than the king and all the other estates of the kingdom; they were for the most part temporal lords of their episcopal sees; they enjoy'd the fines and forfeitures formerly belonging to the crown; the church's patrimony might be perpetually augmented by donations, but never diminished by sale or alienation; the bishops made so good a hand of their influence over the people at elections, and of the need any competitor had of their interest, that

that on those occasions they extorted several privileges, to the abridgement of the royal power and revenue; they likewise never appeared in public without a numerous attendance of gentlemen and soldiers.

The same piece affords a striking instance of human weakness. Christiern, king of Denmark, who also made his way to the throne of Sweden, a prince naturally abounding with good qualities, but they were all extirpated by his servile passion for Sigebrita, a dutch woman, without either birth or beauty, but well stocked with wicked address, and a depraved capacity; she governed him at will, her pleasure was the supreme law; she gave and took away all offices and dignities, and not seldom put the king upon ignominious or violent measures, merely to shew her arbitrariness.

How vile a character is this, in comparison of the beautiful and generous Agnes, mistress to Charles VII. king of France; he was so besotted with his passion for her, that the public affairs were all running to ruin. She one day said to him, Sir, when I was a girl, an astrologer told me, that I should be loved by one of the greatest monarchs in Christendom;

stendom; this prediction, I made no doubt, received its full accomplishments in honour of your love; but your neglect of the state, your inglorious supineness shew me that I was mistaken. No, 'tis not you who are that great king! doubtless 'tis the king of England, who himself has gained so many victories over your dispirited troops, and taken so many of your fine towns; to him I'll go, for he is certainly the person meant by the astrologer. This artful reproof roused the king from his amorous lethargy; he left his mistress and gardens for the camp, where he shewed himself to be the astrologer's great monarch. The history of France gives a pleasant passage of a successor of this Charles VII. relating to astrologers: Francis I. who was a generous patron of arts and sciences, being at Fontainebleau with several mathematicians, who not contented with explaining the motions of the heavenly bodies to him, must needs go about to prove that the different conjunctions of the planets necessarily occasion commotions in states, and the overthrow of kingdoms. The king having heard them very attentively, said, Gentlemen, I be-
lieve

lieve ye are persons deeply learned; and may possibly see into any storm which may be gathering, yet, should your conjectures transpire, so as to raise any turbulent apprehensions among the people, whatever the stars and planets promise you, I say, you shall surely be sacrificed to the public tranquility.

Father Bouhours, a competent judge, affirmed that the French language affords nothing superiour in stile to the revolutions of Sweden and Portugal; and the archbishop of Meaux, still a better judge, said to the Cardinal de Bouillon, *that's a pen fit for the life of Marshal Turenne*; but an honour far more distinguishing was, that in 1701 the King of his own meer motion, nominated him an associate in the Academy of Belles Lettres. His sensibility of this honour was the greater, as he had no expectation of it; however, it perplexed him not a little, as it required his removal to Paris, and consequently the resignation of his benefice, which was his all; for he wanted two years of the standing to quit it with a reserve of a pension. He writ a very pathetic letter, wherein he proposed the expedient of sending every six months

some pieces to the academy, which he said would be better than his presence, 'till his circumstances would allow of his personal attendance, when his assiduity should make amends for his absence, though necessary and involuntary.

The academy acquiesced, and the Abbé acted up to his promise, both in his absence and after his removal to Paris.

In 1710 France had the pleasure of seeing his *Treatise on the Dependence of Britany*, in which it is shewn to be upon a level with, and not above any of the other provinces; this work was the more seasonable, as an historian of that dutchy had lately maintained, that the power of the Kings of France over Britany had no legal origin, but was founded on violence; and those intervals, when the Britains taking advantage of intestine commotions, refused their services to the Kings, are described as times of freedom; and their chiefs, though often of the refuse of the people, are magnified as generous princes, exposing their lives to break their country's fetters.

Though this work endeared the Abbé to all good subjects, as an irrefutable answer

swer to the claim of independancy in Britany; and he was quietly enjoying the satisfaction of contributing to the strength of the crown and the public tranquillity, some insurrections broke out in that factious province, which, though quickly suppressed, animated his patriotism to strike at the very root of them, which he did in a compleat treatise *on the Settlement of the Britons in Gaul*, which came out in 1720.

The interval betwixt his first dissertation on the dependance, and that on the settlement of the Britons, had been employed in a composition, if not more useful, at least more extensive, more suitable to his taste and more interesting to literature, his *History of the Revolutions of the Roman Commonwealth*, which came out in 1719.

This admirable work gained him a very signal mark of regard; it appearing such a masterpiece to the Order of Malta, that, though their history had been written in most living languages, they applied to him to cast their annals into a new form, that the exploits of their Predecessors might appear in a deserved clearness and dignity: he consented, and
it

it was immediately acknowledged as a favour by a formal Letter from the grand master, and a cross of the order. This new history of Malta, being 4 volumes in quarto, was a work of time, too long for the impatience of the public, who were continually enquiring whereabouts it was? when he would have done? when it would be put in the press? and when that was known, the slowness of the impression was complained of: it is true the booksellers worked off two editions at once, yet that which was allotted for abroad, though very numerous, was short of the demand.

It must not be forgotten, that about this time the young duke of Orleans appointed abbé Vertot his interpreter, with an apartment in the palace, and upon his marriage, secretary to his duchess: nor is it the least of his honours that an English nobleman (earl Stanhope) who was equally the scholar, statesman and soldier, corresponded with him on a point of history.

Such were the benefits and the honours which his historical talents acquired; they cannot be said to have been his scope, for after a sacrifice of his very patri-

patrimony to God, his wishes never rose above a leisurely life, free from the anxiety of penury : but for literary honours, which all ranks may reach, and where an ambition is of the happiest influence, so far was he from avoiding them, that he spared no pains to augment and establish them.

Never was author more careful in choosing grand, noble and affecting subjects ; yet the force of his diction equals the dignity of his subject ; he exhibits them with the clearest perspicuity, and the detail of circumstances seems rather an ornament than a superfluity. The peculiar and strong lineaments of the several characters, bring the soul itself to light ; the reader is carried away by his animated descriptions, he marches along with every army, and is determined by the author, in lamenting the conquered, or exulting with the conqueror. His history of the conspiracy of Portugal, represents a kingdom, after a submissive slavery of near a century, changing its condition in one day ; the secret design was spread through the whole nation, yet without taking the least air, and the execution, amidst many dis-
favourable

vourable incidents, every where succeeded, to the destruction of the instruments of tyranny, and the restoration of liberty.

In the *Revolution of Sweden*, an unfortunate outlawed prince, concealed among mountains and mines, finds means to inspirit those rude inhabitants with a love of glory and freedom, and at their head cuts his way to the throne, rescues the regal prerogatives from the shackles, in which the clergy and nobility held it, and dies universally lamented; after reigning without favorites and governing without ministers, as he had conquered without generals.

In the Roman revolutions, the arrangement and colouring of events, together with their position of them in the most striking points of view, speak the abbé's masterly hand; the reader is carried among the senate and people, he imagines himself at times in the *campus martius*, or on the *Tiber*; Rome appears formidable, whilst poverty was no disgrace, and the commander and the soldier were upon equal terms, both living upon a little spot cultivated by their own hands; and its ruin is foreseen, when extend-

extending its conquests, riches began to flow into it from all the subjugated provinces.

This was a proper preamble to the annals of Malta, the order of which owes its institution to a zeal for christianity, and where the most uniform piety consecrates the most intrepid bravery.

When the abbé Vertot read to the Academy any detach'd pieces of these works, their force and beauty were felt with redoubled power; before he had gone through a few pages, he became by degrees one with his subject, he seemed the hero himself, and has often remain'd quite breathless in the Oestrum of his magnanimity; nor was he less impressible on tender subjects: the mother of Coriolanus could not be in a more convulsive agony nor shed more tears at her son's feet, than he at the rehearsal of that petition.

What may be thought equally remarkable is, that the abbé Vertot border'd upon his 45th year when he set about the first piece of history which he published, and that he had past his 70th when he had finished the last, which was that of Malta. He lived
nine

nine years afterwards, but under such extreme languors of body and mind, that when through an habitual application he talked of new projects, of the revolutions of Carthage, and the history of Poland, and his friends would represent to him that he was now incapable both of reading or writing, his answer was, that he had read enough to compose by memory, and writ enough to dictate with fluency.



MELCHIOR de POLIGNAC, died
1741.



De Polignac was no sooner brought into 'life, than the indiscretion of his nurse exposed him to the loss of it: she was unmarried, and from one fault, had, after no long interval, proceeded to a second; in her dread of the consequences she disappeared one evening, leaving the infant upon a dunghill, where he was found crying the next morning, without any hurt or ailment but hunger.

During

During the whole time of his grammatical studies at the jesuits college he never felt the regent's hand, nor was threatened but once, which he incurred by his good-nature: seeing his brother and an intimate of his both extremely perplexed about their theme, he was for relieving them by conveying one to each, under pretence of lending them a pen, in the barrel of which it was inclosed: the regent, no stranger to school fetches, suspecting the loan, ordered the pens to be handed to him, and drawing out the contents, told the school, that to-morrow they should see what scholars got by setting up for instructors; but having the curiosity to divert himself with these precipitate compositions, he found them so ingenious, and so different from each other, and still more from the young author's own, which was the best of the three, that he was easily induced to pardon a fault, of which he would have wished all his pupils capable.

From hence he proceeded to the University, where the opposition betwixt Aristotle and Descartes still subsisting, the senior professors espousing the former, and the junior the latter, the

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abbé fell under a zealous Aristotelian ; but from the very objections against Descartes, he perceived the beauty and rationality of his system ; he had studied both with such penetration, that when he was to perform his theses, he offered publicly to defend the new philosophy, and at his professor's desire agreed on the next day to harangue upon the antients : as this was the first time of the appearance of Carthusianism in the public theses, the assembly was very numerous : on the first day the whole auditory was charmed with his nervous elocution ; and on the second the most bigotted Peripaticians could not complain.

The duke de Chaulnes being appointed to go to Rome, to adjust with Alexander VIII. the differences which had rose to such a height under Innocent XI. concerning the prerogative of the Holy See, and the liberties of the Gallican church, condescended to ask that the abbé de Polignac, then only in his twenty-eighth year, might be assigned his coadjutor : though this was a delicate point, and his initiation in politics, he managed it with such address, that the pope jocularly complained to the duke,

This

This young abbé of yours is a perfect wheedler, he never contradicts me, he seems always to be of my opinion, yet, in the end, I find myself drawn into his. The affair being brought to an accommodation, not disagreeable to France, the abbé was sent with the articles to Paris for the king's signature; the audience was long, and at the issue of it the king said, I have just now been taken up with a man, and he a young man, who has contradicted me in every thing, yet there was no being displeased with him.

At such an age, and with such talents, he preferred the leisure of a seminary to the offers of a court: here he retired to fit himself more compleatly for the ecclesiastical state, for which he had been originally designed, relieving his severer exercises with polite literature, and the sciences; but he was drawn from hence by the king's appointing him ambassador extraordinary to Poland; whither he was to go in a kind of *incognito*, and by sea, France being then at war with the interjacent states.

The vessel was stranded on the coast of Prussia, and ransacked by the savage inhabitants of the coast; but he, desti-

rate of every thing which gains regard but his own merit, was received by Sobieski the king of Poland, with unprecedented distinction, ordering him an apartment in his own palace, and admitting him at all times into his confidence, and even familiarity, which lasted whilst that prince lived.

No man ever met with more universal ingratitude than that worthy monarch: the emperor lost all remembrance of the relief of Vienna, not only refusing the archduchess to his son, as had been promised, but opposed the marriage of that young prince with princess Radzivil. The very Poles his subjects, made but ill returns for his favours. The Sapieha family, whom he raised from obscurity to envied grandeur, conspired against him. Radziciowski his relation, whom he had promoted to the primacy, and the purple, was his enemy; with the primate was linked against him his own queen's brother-in-law, and so far as to form a faction for destroying their benefactor. Lastly, the few Poles who did not rejoice at his death, were little affected at it.

Upon

Upon the demise, several competitors offered themselves: as the disorders and venality upon the vacancy of the Polish throne are equally disgraceful, the abbé laid hold of the opportunity to propose the prince of Conti; and had his measures been seasonably seconded with what was most prevalent among the electors, the French party would have carried the day instead of Augustus XI. elector of Saxony.

The electoral dyet is well worth mentioning for its singularity: the palatines, consisting of above a hundred thousand nobles, repaired to the field of election, in the plains of Warsovia, where they formed themselves into two hundred and fifty troops; all the noblesse were on horseback, except some too poor to buy a horse, who appeared on foot, with old rusty scythes in their hands, like so many husbandmen, but distinguishable by the loftiness of their looks, which superciliously spoke their electoral dignity; these, at a pinch, were gained over to Augustus, for a dram and a crown to each.

It must not be omitted, that among the candidates for the crown of Poland was

Livio Odescalchi, nephew to pope Innocent XI. This prince bid very high; his possessions were set forth in a very pompous inventory, and offered to the Dyet as pledges of his promises; but the rude Poles vouchsafed no other answer to the condescending Italian than a pasquinade, in which his agent was represented only as a solicitor in a suit which his principal had in Poland, with one supplement, that Odescalchi, as an earnest of his bounty, was about sending into Poland, a most curious collection of pictures, statues, and antiques, which were valued at a vast rate in a mock schedule; that he had appropriated a brass medal of Otho for the payment of two-fourths of the army, and that he gave his princely word, to embellish Poland with the inestimable statues of Pasquin and Marforio immediately after his coronation.

The miscarriage was thrown upon the abbé, who, at his return in 1698 was ordered to his abby, from whence, on occasion of the duke of Anjou being invited to the crown of Spain, he writ to Lewis XIV. *Sire, if the prosperity of your majesty does not terminate my misfortunes, it removes in me all sense of them.*

Soon

Soon after, they were terminated, and with several compensations, being sent to Rome on a negotiation which that king had very much at heart, and in which he obtained every thing of the pope; from thence he was sent plenipotentiary to the conferences at Gertruydenburg: where the ministers of the confederate said to have talked in such high terms as drew this sarcasm from the abbé, *You show by your talk, indeed, that you are not used to have the upper hand.*

When at the treaty of Utrecht, the states, upon a suspicion that the French and English ministers were carrying on a clandestine treaty, signified to the former, that they should prepare to leave Holland, the abbé resolutely answered, *Non, Messieurs, nous ne sortirons pas d'ici: nous traiterons chez vous, nous traiterons de vous et nous traiterons sans vous.* Yet must it be owned that the abbé's menace was soon after repaid by one of the Dutch ministers: it was represented to the French plenipotentiaries, that the states would take it as a very kind instance of his majesty's regard for them, if he would be pleased to release the protestants from the gallies and prisons:

the abbé answered, *You intrude where you have no concern; if the king was to desire the states to let loose the criminals in the Raspe and Spin houses, would you not think it strange? If,* replied Mr. Buys *his most christian majesty will own the whores and rogues in those places to be his sisters and brothers as we cordially do the suffering protestants, I'll engage all the doors shall be thrown open.*

At the conclusion of this treaty, the abbé shewed a very delicate gratitude; for owing his nomination to the purple to the claimant of the crown of England, he obtained his sovereign's leave to quit Holland before the final signature of a treaty, which seemed utterly to quash that person's expectations; though not a few among the English execrated it as calculated for his advancement.

Upon the decease of Lewis XIV. he was laid aside, and on the exaltation of Innocent XIII. which soon followed, this pope, his former patron invited him to Rome, where he was greatly instrumental in the elevation of Benedict XIV. and by Lewis XV. appointed to reside there as minister from France. The recompence of his merit received its completion in the arch-

archbishopric of Ausch, which was conferred on him in his absence.

Hitherto the cardinal de Polignac has been considered as a statesman. As to his literary character, the French academy judged him fit to succeed that eminent scholar and prelate Bossuet, even before his *Anti-lucretius* appeared, a poem of twelve thousand lines, equal to Lucretius in versification, but of a doctrine far more rational and sublime.

A seeming chance has been the rise of many great works, as it was of this: the abbé in his return from Poland made some stay in Holland, where becoming acquainted with M. Bayle, he asked him which of the sects in vogue he professed; Bayle eluded the question by repeating some lines from Lucretius, and being closer pressed, he made no other answer than that he was a true protestant; the abbé still urging him, he answered with some emotion, *Yes, Sir, I am a true protestant, and to the utmost extent of the word, for I protest against all that is said and done*; which was followed by another more energetic repetition from Lucretius. The abbé find-
ing

ing that learned person far gone in the system of epicurism, or at least of scepticism, and that these notions were seducingly advanced in his celebrated dictionary, immediately conceived the design of refuting those errors, and his two relegations proved fortunate for the accomplishment.

His consummate knowledge of antiquity appeared in a very singular manner: during his residence at Rome, hearing that a person building a house betwixt Frascati and Grotta Ferrata was put to a stop in digging the foundation, by the remains of very thick and almost impenetrable walls, the cardinal went thither, and surveying its position, he concluded it to be the very situation of Marius's seat; he set men to work, and the first discovery verified his conjecture, it being a fragment of an inscription of Marius's fifth consulship; in the process of the work they came to a stately saloon, where, among other decorations, were ten marble statues of exquisite workmanship, representing the detection of Achilles by Ulysses, at the court of king Lycomedes; under his auspices was likewise discovered the palace of the Cæsars in the Farnesian gardens, upon the

the Palatine mount; and his acquaintance with antient Rome was so general and accurate, that had it suddenly rose from its ruins, he could as readily have visited the chief personages without a guide as without an interpreter. The cardinal would frequently say, that he wished to be sovereign of that capital only to turn the channel of the Tiber from Ponte-mole to Monte Testaccio for one fortnight, to get out the statues, trophies, and other monuments which had been thrown in during the factions, the civil wars, and the incursions of the barbarians; he would also have caused a search to be made among the ruins of the temple of peace, which was burnt in the reign of Commodus, in hopes of finding the branch, the brazen sea, and the other sacred vessels, which Titus had placed there after the destruction of Jerusalem.

Nor was *M. de Polignac* less versed in the more useful sciences: Newton's experiments had been frequently tried in France, but always unsuccessfully, whereby the system of that wonderful genius was fallen into contempt as erroneous. The cardinal, though no
New-

Newtonian, said, *That a fact averred by Newton was not to be hastily rejected, and that a fresh trial ought to be bestowed upon the experiments, till there was a certainty that they had been rightly performed*; accordingly having sent for prisms from England, the experiments were renewed in his presence, and answered, White alone excepted, which any reunion of the rays could not be brought to produce; this favours a conclusion that white is not the effect of that reunion, but of direct and irrefrangible rays. Newton, as he had animadverted upon the French philosophers, as inaccurate, and even partial and fallacious, was not wanting to thank the cardinal for his civility and candour, in a very elegant letter.

The cardinal was equally admirable in his morality, compassionate and grateful to an excess, without envy or revenge; if ever he used any asperity of speech, or loftiness of behaviour, 'twas as a public minister, and for the honour of the crown which he represented. The monks of his abbey at Auchin, who having never seen him had commenced a suit against him, at his

his first appearance among them, were changed into such a temper, that they insisted, among other marks of regard, to entertain him during his stay. They got by their submission, more than the object of their contention; he lett them the abbey revenues for half less than he was offered, and augmented them considerably by draining a large fen.

After all his peregrinations it was his happiness to spend his latter years in repose, and the close of his life was consecrated to the devotion and benevolence, as the course of it had been employ'd in politics and literature.

F I N I S.

E R R A T A.

PAGE 24, Line 12, read *vatum*.
l. 20, abundance. p. 52, l. 26,
ladron. p. 53, l. 8, *dolis*. p. 55 l. 1, *ful-*
gebit: p. 64, l. 5, *Sacy's*. p. 72, l. 10,
in. l. 12, Collection. p. 85, l. 22, dele so.
l. 24, thence. p. 162, l. 17 dele holy.



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